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*A QUARTERLY REVIEW
to explore the implications
of Christianity for our times*

CONGAR • MOUNIER • GOOD • BOECKENFOERDE • WALSH

"THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN CULTURE"—A DISCUSSION

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THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN CULTURE

The accompanying article represents a useful commentary on the Civil War commemorations now taking place in various quarters.

The text represents, with only minor editing, a discussion broadcast early this year over WBAL-FM, the invaluable listener-supported radio station of New York. The moderator was Nat Hentoff, former editor of DOWNBEAT; participants included James Baldwin, author of NOTES OF A NATIVE SON (Beacon), GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN (Universal), and NOBODY KNOWS MY NAME (Dial); Alfred Kazin, author of ON NATIVE GROUNDS (Anchor), A WALKER IN THE CITY (Grove), and THE INMOST LEAF (NOONDAY); Lorraine Hansberry, author of A RAISIN IN THE SUN; Emile Capouya, an editor at Macmillan & Co.; and Langston Hughes, whose many books include SIMPLE STAKES A CLAIM (Rinehart), SELECTED POEMS (Knopf), and A LANGSTON HUGHES READER (Braziller).

The relaxed and spontaneous form of the remarks of these distinguished writers provides a candid presentation of attitudes often neglected in the glow of our easy denunciations of southern racists or that cheap statesmanship which calls for "moderation" in regard to elementary human dignity.

HENTOFF: To begin the subject, which sounds rather alarmingly vague, I'd like to start with the end of the book review that James Baldwin wrote for *The New York Times* a couple of years ago. The review was of poems of Langston Hughes, and you concluded by saying that "he is not the first American Negro to find the war between his social and artistic responsibilities all but irreconcilable."

To what extent do you find this true

in your own writing in terms of the self-consciousness of being a Negro and a writer, the polarity, if it exists?

BALDWIN: Well, the first difficulty is really so simple that it's usually overlooked: to be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious, is to be in a rage almost all the time. So that the first problem is how to control that rage so that it won't destroy you. Part of the rage is this: it isn't only what is happening to you, but it's what's happening all around you all of the time, in the face of the most extraordinary and criminal indifference, the indifference and ignorance of most white people in this country.

Now, since this so, it's a great temptation to simplify the issues under the illusion that if you simplify them enough, people will recognize them; and this illusion is very dangerous because that isn't the way it works.

You have to decide that you can't spend the rest of your life cursing out everybody that gets in your way. As a writer, you have to decide that what is really important is not that the people you write about are Negroes, but that they are people, and that the suffering of any person is really universal. If you can ever reach this level, if you can create a person and make other people feel what this person feels, then it seems to me that you've gone much further, not only artistically, but socially, than in the ordinary, old-fashioned protest way.

I talked about Langston not being the first poet to find these responsibilities all but irreconcilable. And he won't be the last, because it also demands a great deal of time to write, it demands a great deal of stepping out of a social situation in order to deal with it. And all the time you're out of it you can't help feeling a

little guilty that you are not, as it were, on the firing line, tearing down the slums and doing all these obviously needed things, which in fact, other people can do better than you because it is still terribly true that a writer is extremely rare.

HENTOFF: Miss Hansberry, in writing *A Raisin in the Sun*, to what extent did you feel a double role, both as a kind of social actionist "protester," and as a dramatist?

MISS HANSBERRY: Well, given the Negro writer, we are necessarily aware of a special situation in the American setting. And that probably works two ways. One of them makes us sometimes forget that there is really a very limited expression in literature which is not protest, be it black, white or what have you; I can't imagine a contemporary writer any place in the world today who isn't in conflict with his world. Personally, I can't imagine a time in the world when the artist wasn't in conflict; if he was any kind of an artist, he had to be.

We are doubly aware of conflict, because of the special pressures of being a Negro in America, but I think to destroy the abstraction for the sake of the specific is, in this case, an error. Once we come to that realization, it doesn't get quite as confusing as sometimes we tend to treat it.

In my play I was dealing with a young man who would have, I feel, been a compelling object of conflict as a young American of his class of whatever racial background, with the exception of the incident at the end of the play, and with the exception, of course, of character depth, because a Negro character is a reality; there is no such thing as saying that a Negro could be a white person if you just changed the lines or something like this. This is a very arbitrary and superficial approach to Negro character.

But I am taking a long way around

to try to answer your question. There really is no profound problem. I started to write about this family as I knew them in the context of those realities which I remembered as being true for this particular given set of people; and at one point, it was just inevitable that a problem of some magnitude which was racial would intrude itself, because this is one of the realities of Negro life in America. But it was just as inevitable that for a large part of the play, they would be excluded. Because the duality of consciousness is so complete that it is perfectly true to say that Negroes do not sit around 24 hours a day, thinking, "I am a Negro." (LAUGHTER) They really don't. I don't. I don't think he does or anybody else. And, on the other hand, if you say the reverse, that is almost true. And this is part of the complexity that I think you're talking about, isn't it?

BALDWIN: Yes, I agree completely. I think we are bound to get to this, because white men in this country and American Negroes in this country are really the same people. I only discovered this in Europe; perhaps it was always very obvious, but it never occurred to me before. The only people in the world who understand the American white man are American Negroes—(LAUGHTER)—nobody else.

HENTOFF: Langston Hughes, you have a large continuing body of work, and I wondered if you had felt in the course of your long development as a writer, a change in your feeling of this duality as the conditions around you changed, as the struggle for equality became more militant, and the status, to some extent, of the "Negro writer" began to change.

In other words, to what extent did the society around you change the kind of tension under which you wrote?

HUGHES: I must say that I don't

notice any changes as yet. (LAUGHTER)

I happen to be a writer who travels a great deal because I read my poems in public and almost every year I travel over most of the country, south and north. I do, of course, see appreciable changes in some areas of race relations and I trust that my recent work reflects that to some extent, but by and large, it seems to me not really very different from when I was a child. There are still a great many places where you can't get a hamburger or a cup of coffee, or you can't sit on a bench in a railroad station, something of this sort—and not just in the South. Those problems exist in Washington, on the West Coast, and in Maine, you know.

I am, of course, as everyone knows, primarily a—I guess you might even say a propaganda writer; my main material is the race problem—and I have found it most exciting and interesting and intriguing to deal with it in writing, and I haven't found the problem of being a Negro in any sense a hindrance to putting words on paper. It may be a hindrance sometimes to selling them; the material that one uses, the fact that one uses, or that I use, problem material, or material that is often likely to excite discussion or disagreement, in some cases prevents its quick sale. I mean, no doubt it's much easier to sell a story like Frank Yerby writes without the race problem in it, or, yes, like Willard Motley, who also happens to be Negro, but writes without emphasizing the sharpness of our American race problem. Those writers are much more commercial than I or, I think, Miss Hansberry, or James Baldwin, who to me seems one of the most racial of our writers, in spite of his analysis of himself as otherwise on occasion.

BALDWIN: Later for you. (LAUGHTER)

KAZIN: Emil Capouya, from what you've observed in publishing as a whole, do you think that Langston Hughes' point has validity, that the degree of sharpness in which the racial problem is written about, is a deterrent to sales, let's say, in the book field? I wonder if there isn't a distinction between magazine writing and book writing here.

CAPOUYA: No, I think not. From an editor's point of view, somebody who's professionally interested in buying or selling literary material, an artist and a writer are two different people.

First of all, he's an artist, and as such his claims are absolute. But he's also a commodity, and as a commodity he has no rights at all. He just has a market value.

So to come directly to your question: do I think that the material that a Negro writer may find readiest to hand is questionable from a market point of view, I'd say that each writer is an individual case.

Mr. Hughes suggested that it's been a stumbling block on his road to riches, but that wouldn't be the case obviously for Mr. Baldwin whose business as a novelist is largely with that material. And Miss Hansberry has had a great success, I think partly because of what that great public that went to see that play thought of as exotic material.

HUGHES: May I say that from long experience with publishers, and many of them—I have about six now—it has been my feeling that if a publisher has one Negro writer on his list or two at the most, he is not very likely to take another if the Negro writer is dealing in Negro themes? And it's not prejudice, it's simply—"Well, we have a book, a Chinese novel on our list. We don't want any more Chinese novels."

And the same thing is true in the theater. Once in a blue moon, there's a hit like *Raisin in the Sun*, but the Broad-

way producers will tell you quite frankly, "No more Negro plays. They're not commercial, we can't sell them. People won't go to the box office."

So if you want to make money out of writing, being a Negro writer, I mean quickly and easily, I would say become a Willard Motley, become a Frank Yerby.

CAPOUYA: I don't think that's the whole truth in relation to the way in which the question was originally posed. Suppose there were two plays about the Jewish East Side—

HUGHES: Yes, it's not a matter really of racial prejudice; it's a matter of the economy we're dealing in.

MISS HANSBERRY: Well, I wouldn't be so quick to decide whether it is or isn't prejudice. There are so many different ways of saying the same thing. It would be more than wishful thinking to me to exclude prejudice regarding Negroes in any area of life. I just don't think that's realistic.

It's prejudice when you can't get an apartment; it's probably prejudice when a skilful writer cannot publish because of some arbitrarily decided notion of what is or is not, as they tell me all the time, parochial material, of narrow interest, and so forth.

In a culture that has any pretensions towards sophistication or interest in human beings, there shouldn't be any designations of kinds of material. A good book should find a publisher.

HUGHES: Since the problem of the writer as a commodity has been brought up, I think it is by and large true to say that for the Negro writer to make a living is doubly hard due to the prejudice that Miss Hansberry has spoken about in other areas related to writing.

For example, I told you that I'm a lecturer and I read my poems. I have been with two or three of the top agencies. Those agencies cannot, as a rule,

book me at women's clubs. Women's clubs have teas; they do not wish to mingle socially with their speaker apparently, and they do not wish to invite their speaker's friends in whatever town he may be speaking on the program, because it's followed by a social event. Therefore, it's a rare occasion when I read my poems to a women's club.

If you want a job in the publishing industry, try and get it. How many editors of color can anyone name on any of our New York publishing houses? You may find an occasional girl secretary at the switchboard or a typist or a stock-room boy, but for the writer himself to get some sort of work related to his actual writing in publishing is well nigh impossible, I think.

Until very recently, in the last few years, Negroes did not write for Hollywood. Nothing was really sold to Hollywood. That's sort of a new development. I have been writing for 30 years and I've had one Hollywood job in 30 years. Prejudice doesn't keep a writer from writing; if you're colored, you can write all you want to, but you just try and sell it, that's all.

KAZIN: May I go back a moment to the point that Mr. Baldwin began with, this alleged conflict between the social and the artistic in American life?

You know, words like social and artistic are easy to use, and I'm sure that if I had to go through the daily humiliations that certain of my friends go through, I would feel this way.

But let me for a moment, put it on a purely theoretical plane, where art may be discussed. America itself has always been a social question. All that's good in American writing, American art, comes out of the profound confrontation of social facts. It was true of *Moby Dick*, of *Leaves of Grass*. It comes out of what I consider to be the driving force behind all things, which is human

hunger, human desire. Only it's a question, of course, not of how much you desire or how bad you feel, but how artistically you can realize your desire.

We have to consider two things. One is the current fashion to believe that art is somehow created apart from society, on the basis of purely individual will, as opposed to the marvelous books published in this country between, I would say, 1911 and 1934 or '35, many of which, like Faulkner's and Steinbeck's, Mr. Hughes' and other such books, are based on very real and agonizing social problems. And I must say that in this centenary year of the Civil War, it's hard to forget that the Negro is the central issue in American history, has been the central issue all along, has been the real crux of our history and our aspirations as a people, and that, therefore, the question that comes up is always how deeply, how profoundly, how accurately do we recognize this social kind of drive in our literature right now?

And one thing that's happening right now in middle class writing everywhere is what's happening to Negroes too: people don't have as many beefs as they think they have; they often have no real beefs; they are very often led by purely arbitrary problems, and consequently, a good deal of the tremendous whiplash of hunger, hunger in the widest sense, the deepest sense, has been forgotten here.

I think—to put it very bluntly—that in America there cannot be any conflict between the so-called social and artistic impulse; that one must recognize that what we call art is the most profound realization of some social tendency, and that wherever you don't have this social awareness, social intelligence, then, it seems to me, you don't have art either.

In other words, the Negro has been not merely a writer, he's also been a character, and he's been one of the most

profound characters in American literature. I don't mean Uncle Tom, either. I mean a character from Faulkner, a character from many, even, pre-Civil War, novelists, who were always aware of the Negro as a force, a human being, as a problem, as a challenge, as a lover, as many things. And one must not forget that this problem goes to the very essence of our life of civilization.

And that's why I'm so troubled when Mr. Baldwin, for reasons which I can well imagine, but which I want, for once, to pretend I don't understand—opens by bringing up this whole question of the conflict between the social and the artistic.

I think that art is never created when it is too aware of this kind of conflict. I also don't believe in conflicts that are realized. Once there is a conflict, the thing to do is by-pass it and go on to a third force, as such.

I'm thinking, for example, of Mr. Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son*, which for me, in many ways, is the most brilliant of Negro books, even though it's a collection of essays, of modern American writing. And I've been struck, in re-reading it, by the power, the brilliance and the vividness of it.

HUGHES: You know what I would say about it? I would say it's the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of today. (LAUGHTER)

KAZIN: Well, I happen to like this *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. I think it's a masterpiece.

And the reason it's a masterpiece is because the broken glass of the '43 Harlem riot, the miseries of personal friends—all these things have been captured and realized as a piece of art. And the minute one tries to break away from this, tries to get away from this enormous passion, then one is lost.

The other thing is that one must recognize that art is a word that people use, but the ability to create is something

which is utterly God-given, accidental, and capricious. And I think, for example, to speak of something I know rather intimately, when the Jewish immigrants, from whom I come, arrived in this country 50, 60 years ago, there was a whole hoard of sweatshop poets and they were miserable people. They worked 18, 19 hours a day; they lived horrible lives. None of this poetry that I have seen, in English, in Hebrew, or in Yiddish, is any good at all. And then suddenly in the last 15 years, we've had a group of writers, like Saul Bellow and Norman Mailer and Bernard Malamud and others, who, with enormous surprise to themselves, I think, have suddenly created 5 or 6 really good books, which are as fresh as anything can be.

Now, one reason they've done this is that they've come to recognize their fate as being universal in some sense, and not merely accidental or parochial. I don't mean that they shouldn't write about parochial things, on the contrary, but they've come to recognize the universal in this.

And I ask myself, what is the difference between those lovable, dear people 60 years ago, with their awful sweatshop poetry, and a writer who to my mind is as first-class as Saul Bellow in one or two short things?

I can only say it's a question of the welding together at a certain moment of all these impulses, without for a moment forgetting that intelligence and social passion come into play here. And one mustn't ever try to divide the two. Otherwise, it becomes a problem in the economic history of the writer; it becomes a problem in the social history of the writer; it does not become a problem of art, as such, which is something very different.

BALDWIN: There isn't any conflict between what you said and what I mean. I should clarify my terms some more.

In that particular book review, I was using the conflict between social and artistic responsibility in a very limited and specific way. I know that art comes out of something much deeper than anything that can be named. I know it is always and must be social, because what are you investigating except man and the ways in which he lives, and the ways in which he tries to remake his world, and the ways in which he sometimes fails and sometimes succeeds?

Perhaps I was using the wrong word there; perhaps I should have said propagandistic. Because I don't think there's any point really in blinking this fact and I don't think it can ever be used to defend oneself or excuse oneself for failure, which after all has to be personal and private failure.

Now, there's no point in pretending that being a Negro writer in this country doesn't present certain particular hazards which you would not have if you were white. It is perfectly true, as Langston says, that anybody with his comparable reputation and body of work, who was white, would have much more money than Langston does. This is a fact. But the Negro writer is not as interesting a subject to me as the Negro in this country in the minds of other people—the Negro character, as you put it—and the role that he's always played in the American subconscious, which has never really been dealt with. It has always been there, almost like a corpse which no one knows what to do with, floating in the waters of the national life. And really everything in America can almost be defined by the presence of the Negro in it, including the American personality.

To deal with this, I think, is the real challenge one faces. Somehow actually to unify this country—because it never has been united—and to make a wedding for the first time really, between blacks and whites. Because, this is really the

history of a very long love affair, and it's this, much more than anything else which Americans are afraid to look at and don't want to believe.

KAZIN: To use a cryptic phrase, the presence of the Negro in America, in the whole imaginative and moral history of this country, is what I call the central fact.

I've been reading Civil War history for the last few months for an article I'm doing, and I'm struck again and again by the enormous effort so many people made in the '30's and '40's of the last century in the North to overlook the Negroes, to make sure that their little Unitarian, Abolitionist hopes would get rid of him. But again and again the fact came up, it could not be by-passed, and it couldn't be by-passed any more by the Abolitionists who looked the other way, than it could be by-passed by the Southern slavemasters. And now, in the midst of this agonizing struggle going on in the South, which the whole world is watching, the fact remains, because of the very nature of American democracy, that never in history has a whole body of former slaves been made the issue of human and civic equality on such a large scale as in this country.

The love affair, which I would say is more a mutual and fascinated awareness of each other, is itself the very incidence of the agony and passion of the Negro's presence in American life. And this is why, when you recognize the social factor, as Faulkner does in his best work—and I'm not thinking here of Joe Christmas—I'm thinking here of the total context he creates—then you recognize the depth of emotion, the depth of commitment out of which art can come.

Now, the economic problem is something else. It is disgusting that a lecturer should have to be banned from a wom-

en's tea club because he might have to have tea with them.

But think what a marvelous story this makes, about America: people who think they would like to hear the lecturer, are afraid to have the tea. Note the slightly comic element, not in the sense of being amiable, but in revealing human paradox and hypocrisy.

When I was a professor at a New England college some years ago, there were two Negro boys in the college, a testimony to its Abolitionist background. And, of course, these boys were miserable and about as lonely as a spar of wood on a Cape Cod beach. But the fact remains that out of this kind of experience would come to an artist, white or Negro, a sense of the extraordinary comedy of social hopes and moral would-be feelings of this country, too—which is, I submit, as close to the life of art as the suffering and anxiety of an individual writer who happens to be a Negro here. And this is why I hope that we will not only remember, as we all must, what is happening to each of us who is a Negro down south, but also of the enormous presence of the Negro as a fact in the American imagination, which again and again has created something which is absolutely inextricable—it cannot be lost, cannot be forgotten, cannot be by-passed, in our minds for a moment.

HUGHES: Speaking of the celebration of the centennial of the Civil War, I have just written yesterday columns for *The Chicago Defender*, for which I write, using my Simple character as a kind of social protest mouthpiece, and I'd like to read you a section because it involves the very thing that you're talking about.

Simple is in the barbershop and this is what he says:

"I sit in that barber chair, thinking about how God must love poor folks

because he made so many of them in my image. (LAUGHTER)

"You know, as long as I've been poor, I'm not used to it. My papa were poor before me and my grandpa were poorer than that, being a slave which did not even own hisself. So, I was settin in that barberchair thinking, one day the time might come when I will own Old Master's grandson, since him nor none of his white relations won't let me get hold a nothing else."

"What on earth are you talking about," I asked, "reinstating slavery? Are you out of your mind?"

"I was sort of dozin and dreamin whilst he cut my hair," said Simple, "and in snoozin I kept thinkin about how much I been hearin about this here centennial of the Civil War and stuff the white folks has been tellin—intendin to celebrate in honor of the North and South. And they're goin to be on parades and meetins and battles and things like they were 100 years ago. One way of makin people remember what that Civil War were all about might be to bring back slavery for a month or two, only this time, reverse it. Make the white folks the slaves and me the master."

"I would like to own some of them white Simples on my grandma's side, which were the ones, I understand, that gave me my name. Oh, I would like to own a few white folks just once." (LAUGHTER) "Maybe I could work out of them some of the money that they owe my great-grandfolks and never did pay. Else make up for these low wages which I'm gettin right now."

"I would like to own me some rich white slaves, not used to workin like me for hardly enough to pay income tax when April, let alone Harlem rent and balancing your budget."

"Dream on," I said.

"From dawn to long after dark, I would find something for them white

folks to do," said Simple, "if I owned them, and come the end of the week, not pay them a cent. That would be a real good way, I figure, to celebrate the centennial. Make it real, not just play-actin, but bring slavery back to its own doorstep. One hundred years, it is time to turn the tables."

"But don't you know, since I was dreamin about all this, the barber cut my hair too short?"

"It looks all right to me," I said, "In fact, I would say, with you, the less hair the better."

"I might have bad hair," said Simple, "But I've got a good-shaped head." (LAUGHTER)

Well now, I very often try to use social material in a humorous form and most of my writing from the very beginning has been aimed largely at a Negro reading public, because when I began to write I had no thought of achieving a wide public. My early work was always published in *The Crisis* of the NAACP, and then in *The Opportunity* of the Urban League, and then the Negro papers like the *Washington Sentinel* and the *Baltimore American*, and so on. And I contend that since these things, which are Negro, largely for Negro readers, have in subsequent years achieved world-wide publication—my work has come out in South America, Japan, and all over Europe—that a regional Negro character like Simple, a character intended for the people who belong to his own race, if written about warmly enough, humanly enough, can achieve universality.

In fact, I think my Simple character has achieved universality with the very kind of thing that he talks about here in the barber chair, because all around the world poor people have economic problems, all around the world, in almost every country, there is some sort of racial problem. In Japan it's—what

do they call them?—the Ainu; in India, its the Untouchables; in France, its the *sals Algériens*.

These problems are not limited just to America. But they impose no limitation on the writer one way or another.

Norman Mailer was mentioned—I didn't know he was a Jewish writer until right now—he achieved a universality, in spite of his Jewish background.

And I don't see, as Jimmy Baldwin sometimes seems to imply, any limitations, in artistic terms, in being a Negro. I see none whatsoever. It seems to me that any Negro can write about anything he chooses, even the most narrow problems: if he can write about it forcefully and honestly and truly, it is very possible that that bit of writing will be read and understood, in Iceland or Uruguay.

KAZIN: I agree entirely, Mr. Hughes. I was thinking about the difference between two of Richard Wright's books, one of which moved me enormously when I was younger than I am now, *Native Son*, the other, *The Outsider*, which I didn't like at all. I agree with you entirely about the need to be parochial, the need to write out of one's milieu and to one's milieu; in fact, Wright's *The Outsider* is my text to prove it.

When I read about this Negro on a train meeting this hunchback, who made common cause with him because they were both symbols of the outsider, I thought this was weak artistically; I felt it was, as the French say, *voulu*, it was willed, it was not real. What seemed to me to be absolutely legitimate, however, were the profoundly touching scenes in which Bigger was involved in *Native Son*, which still is a very powerful and enormously moving book.

We Americans are very symbolic to ourselves as well as to other people. And very often we think of ourselves as being in the forefront of the world. (I think we still are. I still think we're

more revolutionary than any other country in the world, at least implicitly, in terms of the kind of society we're trying to build.)

But the point I'm getting at is that the Negro tends very often today to think of himself as being the symbol of man in the outside world, because of the enormous fact of the race problem in all countries of the world, because of the enormous suffering and wars going on right now. The Negro middle class writer in America, may, if he is in Paris, as Wright was, think of himself as being the symbol rather than the fact. And my point is that only when the Negro thinks of himself as a fact can art begin. The minute he thinks of himself as a symbol, then theory creeps in and the whole problem is dis-social, dis-artistic.

When you're writing out of the actual broken glass of the actual confused heats of that race riot in '43 in the Harlem streets, when Jimmy took his father to the grave, then you have the beginning of what you don't understand too well.

There is a certain law for art: not to know as you're writing what everything means. It's being impressed with the fact, not with the significance of the fact. Too often one tends, because of the enormous centrality of the Negro position today in world experience, to say, "Well, we all know what that means," but we don't. It all goes back to one house, one street, one uncle or grandmother, or whatever.

MISS HANSBERRY: I don't think that there should be any over-extended attention to this question of what is or what isn't universal.

I think that Simple, for instance, is as kin to the Shakespearean wise fool as any other character in literature I've ever heard of, but we don't notice the Englishness of a Shakespearean fool while we're being entertained and educated by his wisdom; the experience just

happens. It happens because people have rent problems everywhere in the world and because men are oppressed everywhere in the world. The point of contact is innate to the piece to the extent that it is true, to the extent that it is art, which is what I think that you were saying.

I have been distressed personally, in connection with something that Mr. Kazin was saying, having to do with the traditional treatment of Negro characters in American literature—let's speak now of non-Negro writers. I was perplexed to find, when I addressed myself to that question in two popular essays, that nobody seemed to know what on earth I was talking about—which, of course, could be a matter of delivery. On one occasion I tried to discuss the character, Walter Lee, the young man in my play, in terms of why, as you said a moment ago, in the so-called white mind, he was still an expression of exoticism, no matter how he had been created. Many people, apparently, recognized his humanity, but he was still exotic to them.

In my opinion, since man is so complex and since I disagree with most of the despairing crowd, if you're going to get ridiculous and talk about man being basically anything, you may as well say he's probably basically good. If that is true, then it is also true that man is trying to accommodate his own guilt always, all of us.

And it seems to me that one of the things that has been done in the American mentality is to create this escape valve of the exotic Negro, wherein it is possible to exalt abandon on all levels, and to imagine that while I am dealing with the perplexities of the universe, look over there, coming down from the trees—(LAUGHTER)—is a Negro who knows none of this, and wouldn't it be

marvelous if I could be my naked, brutal, savage self again?

This permeates our literature in every variation: I don't believe that Negro characters as created thus far have overcome that problem. I don't even believe that the Negro artist has overcome it, because we have been affected by it.

For example, the Emperor Jones is not a man in conflict with the world. He is an arch-symbol that never existed on land, sea, or under it; and to the extent that we recognize something about him, we recognize something symbolized in our own minds. I think this would also be true of Porgy.

The discussion of the Negro character has been so primitive in the past, we've been so busy talking about who's a stereotype and who isn't, we have never talked about it as art. I maintain that the problem is that these characters as they've appeared in literature have never gained full human stature because the writers who have created them haven't thought about them as men in the first place. It isn't a matter of just wanting to change how they speak. Everytime you say something about *Porgy and Bess*, somebody says, "Well, you know, Negroes did speak dialect 40 years ago." Heavens, they still do. That is not the argument; the argument is that Porgy is not a man.

KAZIN: No, he isn't. I think that American literature written by white people is probably 99.9 per cent full of these stereotypes and that lately we have been treated to the worst stereotype of all, which is what Norman Mailer calls the "White Negro," namely, the noble savage brought back as an example to the bourgeois white American.

BALDWIN: I have some objections to Faulkner's Negro characters. I'll try to tell you what they are. I think the principal one is that not only is there something left out, there is something

left out that should be there. Even in the great portrait of Joe Christmas—the only way is to put it as bluntly as possible, then we can go back and modify it—there is something about him which rubs me the wrong way, and it's not his situation and it isn't his dialect, it isn't any of these things at all. What it is is that he's also a kind of apology for an injustice which is really still not being dealt with.

Now Faulkner is a very good example of what I mean. The Southern writers who have written about Negroes and have written about them well have all written about them in more or less the same way, essentially out of a feeling of guilt. What is most mysterious is that it is a guilt to which they cling. It's a guilt without which their identities would be threatened. What is so fascinating about this whole Negro-white relationship in America, is what it means in the American personality to have a Negro around. That is why he's always the noble savage in no matter what guise, from Eisenhower to Norman Mailer, nobody can give this up. Everybody wants to have this sort of walking symbol around to protect something in themselves which they do not want to examine.

But what one deals with in the world every day, really, isn't the world's malice or even the world's indifference, it's the world's ignorance. And it's not ignorance of the Negro or the fact of Negro life as such. It's an ignorance of a certain level of life which no one has ever respected or it's never been real in America. You can almost say—you can say, in fact—that one of the reasons that the Negro is at the bottom of the social heap in America, is because it's the only way everyone in America will know where the bottom is. (LAUGHTER)

KAZIN: Exactly, as you put it, marvelously, to show us where the bottom

is, where everything that is fundamental is in our country. But at the bottom, there are people who, understandably because they've been at the bottom so long, will be seen by an imaginative writer like Faulkner in a certain way.

Now, would you want Faulkner to write about the Negro only, so to speak, as he *should* be in our minds, if he were given half a chance, or do you want him out of all these hundreds of years of Southern bondage and Southern slave-owning and Southern prejudice to release that powerful talent and throw it away?

Let me put this in a personal way, if I may—I too come from people who are not altogether unused to prejudice. Now, only 15 years ago a million and a half Jewish children were put into bonfires by the Nazis just because they were Jewish children. It's a terrible fact, part of the incredible oppression of the Second World War. Nevertheless, if I read Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, with its venomous, unbearable portrait of Shylock, though I think it's false, I have to admit it's a great artistic creation. And it seems to me that over the years, one thing that's happened to me as a writer in America, is that I've learned to say that Shylock is a great character and not worry about him so much.

Don't misunderstand me, though. I'm not trying to sermonize on this question. All I'm saying here is that we do have a handful of books that seem to be written out of the bottom, and one mustn't presume too much here too, for this reason: Joe Christmas is not a Negro. No one knows what or who he is. People think he's a Negro, and the point in that great novel—*Light in August* is a very great book, an extraordinary book—is that because people do not know him, but merely see in him what they think he is, not what he really is (he could be anything)—they do everything

to him right up to the end. They murder him, they castrate him, and he becomes the dead Christ on the American cross. Again and again, it's made clear, that the fact of Negro suffering has created this figure.

On the other hand, when Faulkner writes a letter to *The New York Times* about segregation in the South, he writes like a damn fool, he writes like any typical, vulgar Mississippian. When he writes a novel which has a Negro character in it, he's a great artist.

HUGHES: Oh, certainly, he's an amazingly good writer. However, it seems to me that he doesn't really and fully understand even the Southern Negro with whom he's lived all his life. Did you see *Requiem for a Nun*, last season?

KAZIN: Yes. It was terrible. I hated *Requiem for a Nun*, both as a book and as a play.

HUGHES: In that play he has this Negro woman who is going to her death for having committed some sort of murder, I believe, which she felt was justified, and the lawyer or the judge is talking to her, and she says she doesn't mind dying, in essence, because she is going to Heaven. And this Southern white lawyer, judge, or whatever he is, says, "What would a woman like you do in Heaven?" And she says, "Ah kin work." Now, that is the most false line in literature regarding the Negro, because no Negro in God's world ever thought of Heaven as a place to work. He just doesn't understand the Negro mind, that's all.

KAZIN: But as a writer, and a very good writer, do you think it's necessary to understand something in order to create a good character? Is understanding, in the deepest human, civic sense, the brotherly sense, is this really necessary for artistic creation?

HUGHES: To create a believable character, you certainly have to have a

certain amount of understanding. And this woman in *Requiem* became so unreal to me.

KAZIN: Yes, I agree with you about that case, but let's consider Dilsey. She was also a Southern Negro, and a character who would cause me the deepest pain and chagrin if I were a Negro; nevertheless, I believe she is a great creation.

HUGHES: Yes, I don't doubt that.

KAZIN: Well, you can't understand Negroes on one page and forget them on another. Because understanding is always the same. It's typical Faulkner, who reveals his limitations in non-artistic areas. But as a writer, once in a while, something is created which comes out of the deepest, most unconscious sense of love.

Let me give you an instance: you may remember that the fourth part of *The Sound and the Fury* opens with Dilsey coming out on the porch. She is portrayed in a typical hand-me-down costume of a woman who has worked for 50 years for this rotting family, the Compsons. The costume itself is demeaning, but the description of Dilsey, everything about her, is of such an extraordinary artistic beauty and intensity that I can never read it without being moved to tears. The thing has been made flesh, and she is there, we know her. This is something very different, I submit, from 101 moralizings that you might get from well-meaning Northern "liberals."

All I'm saying is on this page—and on many pages of that book—he really created a human being, and even when he sees her without understanding in his mind, there was tremendous understanding in his heart.

HUGHES: Yes, and I think another fine Southern white writer, Carson McCullers, is also successful in creating character.

MISS HANSBERRY: I think, Mr.

Kazin, that you may be imposing on my earlier remarks a lack of dimension that wasn't there. What I was trying to say is exactly the opposite of what you emphasized. I am not concerned with doing away with the mere traditional paraphernalia of the inexpressive, crude Negro character. That is not the point. I myself, very arbitrarily, after deliberate thought, chose to write about the Negro working class, although I come from the middle class. Eventually, I think more of our writers are going to begin to deal with the Negro middle class, which most white people don't know exists.

But we're not trying to escape from some image of truth. When you spoke a moment ago, you seemed to suggest we would be satisfied if the image were more glossy, more dressed-up. That is not the point. When language is handled truly, and Negro speech used with fidelity—which doesn't have to do with the dropping of g's and misplacing of verbs—when the essence of character is as true and as complicated as—character should be, whatever character you're dealing with, only then ought we to be satisfied.

There is a comedy line in my play, where the young daughter says to one of her suitors, "You think this about women because this is what you got from all the novels that men have written." Obviously, novelists have created some memorable women characters. But I am altogether certain that in regard to the inner truths of character, the woman character will always partially elude the male writer. Of course, women, like Negroes, I'm afraid, accept many images of themselves that come from literature, and start to act those roles, but there are other truths, which can be found only by studying people in depth.

You mentioned Carson McCullers. There's a scene in *Member of the Wedding*, when the young Negro nephew of

Bernice is being chased by a lynch mob, and she takes the young white boy whom she has nursed all his life—he's about to die, I think, because of some constitutional weakness—and this woman's preoccupation is with that child. I happen to think that it was a lovely play and I believe Bernice's character, but we are now talking about these extra nuances, and my point is that the intimacy of knowledge which the Negro may have of white Americans does not exist in the reverse.

KAZIN: That's absolutely true.

MISS HANSBERRY: William Faulkner has never in his life sat in on a discussion in a Negro home where there were all Negroes. It is physically impossible. He has never heard the nuances of hatred, of total contempt from his most devoted servant and his most beloved friend, although she means every word when she's talking to him, and will tell him profoundly intimate things. But he has never heard the truth of it. For you, this is a fulfilling image, because you haven't either. I can understand that. Obviously Faulkner is a monumental talent, but there are other dimensions of that character, and as I would create her, or Jim, or Langston, there would be a world of difference, and it's this we're trying to get to. I want white writers to begin to create Negro characters. We need it desperately.

BALDWIN: Lorraine's point is very important. We have to look more carefully at the characters created by Faulkner, or by Carson McCullers. Lorraine mentioned that absolutely incredible moment when this woman's nephew is being chased by a lynch mob, and she's worried about this little boy. That scene doesn't reveal anything about the truth of Negro life, but a great deal about the state of mind of the white Southern woman who wrote it.

Regardless of Faulkner's talent, the

thing I will not settle for is that this image is maintained. Southerners have an illusion and they cling to it desperately; in fact, the whole American Republic does. These characters come out of a compulsion. Dilsey is Faulkner's proof that the Negro—who, as Langston points out, has been worked and worked and worked and for nothing, who has been lynched and burned and stolen from for generations—has forgiven him. The reason the walls in the South cannot come down, the reason that the panic is too great for the walls to come down, is because when they do, the truth will come out. And it's perfectly true, as Lorraine says, you can't know what I'm talking about, if you haven't been in a home with all Negroes together, if you haven't listened to Dilsey at home—who might be my mother—and heard what she says about the people she works for—and what is more important than that, not only what she says, but what she knows. And she knows much more about them than they will ever know about her, and there's a very good reason for this.

Faulkner has never sat in a Negro kitchen while the Negroes were talking about him, but we have been sitting around for generations, in kitchens and everywhere else, while everybody talks about us, and this creates a very great difference. It also creates—now speaking specifically for the Negro writer—a very great advantage. While I was living abroad in France, somebody said something—it's something, I guess, the French say all the time—but this day it was said to me and it rang a bell. He said, "If you want to know what's happening in the house, ask the maid." And it occurred to me that in this extraordinary house, I'm the maid. (LAUGHTER)

MISS HANSBERRY: Which is a different relationship, because the employer doesn't go to the maid's house.

You see, people get this confused. They think that the alienation is equal on both sides. It isn't. We have been washing everybody's underwear for 300 years. We know when you're not clean. (LAUGHTER)

KAZIN: I accept everything you say, Miss Hansberry, but I wonder if you would allow me to try to persuade you that it's still slightly irrelevant to the point I was making.

MISS HANSBERRY: Oh, then I'm sorry.

KAZIN: No, no; as I was irrelevant to your point, you're being irrelevant to mine. This is the way people learn to talk to each other.

My point is this: I don't for a moment mean to say that the truth about Negro life has been accomplished, to use the Biblical phrase, forever. I'm talking about what has actually been done as art.

This is an artistic question, it's not a social question. I know that Negroes have been maids, they have been the drawers of water and the hewers of wood. They have been the slaves and slaves do all the work.

But my point is this: it's something Edward Hopper, the painter, once said, which has stuck in my mind: "Thought is endless, but the picture exists in space and time."

Every Negro walking the streets, every American, is full of the past, the present and the future. No book, either his book or a white man's book, can satisfy him about the truth. Because the truth is not only about what he has and what he is, but what he wants to become, what he wants America to become. Therefore, there is no book that exists right now that in the deepest sense can be satisfying to him.

But a book does exist in space and time. Those distortions of Shylock, or of Dilsey, or of anyone else, horrible as they

are to our conscience, nevertheless exist as such. Dostoyevski, Tolstoy, Melville, all the great novelists, have written the most frightfully distorted anti-Negro, anti-Japanese, anti-Semitic, anti-French stereotypes. Do American characters come off much better, in American fiction as a whole? Not always in contemporary American fiction. They are portrayed uniformly as lechers, sadists, masturbators, idiots, bourgeois decadents and the rest. This is a society that is full of self-disgust. It doesn't know what it wants or what it believes, and it's constantly getting rid of its own guilt about its own unsatisfied wantings in that way.

My point is that a book exists in itself, as such, and perhaps—it's hard for a writer to admit—perhaps, all of us who write books are not so busy mirroring life, as we always think we are, as creating life.

For example, Tolstoy created a great book like *War and Peace* and then looked about him and found out something about the actual conditions of serfdom and contemporary Russia; he discovered, what his wife had told him beforehand, that the two things—the thing he had created and the world around him—had nothing to do with each other in any immediate sense.

This is a terrible paradox. But the fact remains that there are no people anywhere like the people in our books or anybody else's book.

Simple is delicious and wise and right because he is a product of Mr. Hughes' imagination. Many people have gone into making him up. He is no one else, he is Simple. This is true of any true character.

It's even true of a good autobiography like Jimmy Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son*, where we find that the author himself becomes his own myth, as Thoreau said about himself in *Walden*.

I am not trying to say that Mr. Faulk-

ner is the last word on Negroes in America. God forbid. What I am saying is that something was created, something was not just being talked about, hopeful and wishful, all the time. Something that is true, I think, as such.

BALDWIN: We are talking somewhat at cross purposes, because I cannot disagree with what you say.

KAZIN: But there isn't any argument. We are reflecting on a problem which has many facets. I don't disagree with you about this thing at all. How can I? What is there to disagree about? Do you think I would say that Dilsey is the truth about Negroes in America? That would be a horrible untruth.

BALDWIN: All right, I accept the proposition that perhaps we are not so much reflecting life as trying to create it—but let's talk now not about books but about this country.

I'm talking now about the role of the Negro, and what seems to me to be at stake is that somehow the Negro contains a key to something about America which no one has yet found out about—which no one has yet faced. Contains maybe the key to life. I don't know; I don't want to talk about it in such mythical terms.

My point is that there is a tremendous resistance on the part of the entire public to know whatever it is, to deal with whatever this image means to them.

HENTOFF: I wonder how many doors that key unlocks.

Langston Hughes has mentioned the urge to whiteness among some Negro writers. This leads, of course, to assimilationist novels, but I wonder if it doesn't also lead, without complete realization on the part of some Negro writers, politicians, and others, to a desire for equality within the white value-structure. Has there been enough questioning of this within Negro writing?

BALDWIN: I feel that there's been far too little.

HENTOFF: In other words, equal for what?

BALDWIN: Equal for what, yes. You know, there's always been a very great question in my mind of why in the world—after all I'm living in this society and I've had a good look at it—what makes you think I want to be accepted?

MISS HANSBERRY: Into this.

BALDWIN: Into this.

MISS HANSBERRY: Maybe something else.

BALDWIN: It's not a matter of acceptance or tolerance. We've got to sit down and rebuild this house.

MISS HANSBERRY: Yes, quickly.

BALDWIN: Very quickly, and we have to do it together. This is to you, Alfred, speaking now, just as a writer. You know, in order to be a writer you have to demand the impossible, and I know I'm demanding the impossible. It has to be—but I also know it has to be done. You see what I mean?

KAZIN: Yes, I see entirely what you mean but let's talk about this presence of the Negro in American history for a moment, because when we really get into the question of the white writers' portraits of Negroes we're talking about this larger question. Maybe that way we can come back to the difficulty we had earlier.

This presence of the Negro in American civilization, I said before, is the central fact about our moral history. And the conflict in the American heart, which exists in Negroes as well as among whites, comes out of a constant tension between what this country is ideally supposed to mean and what it actually has been as such. The problem has become more and more catastrophic and dangerous because of the growing world anxiety about possible world annihilation. Suddenly you begin to realize that people

who don't treat their fellow-citizens well are, in a sense, building up a bonfire for everyone else in the same way, as is likely to happen in Africa before our generation is over.

At the same time, this very tension in America between the ideal moral purpose and the reality, also creates two things. One, it creates the fact that we never know quite what we want, as you yourself admitted before. You said you weren't quite sure you wanted equality to disrupt you. And secondly, it creates the white man's constant bewilderment between what he feels abstractly to be his duty, and the actuality of a society in which human beings were held as slaves, and in which, 25 years later, these people were sitting in Washington as senators.

So you have this enormous comedy of American pretension and American actuality, leaving the white man, who is also here, in a constant bewilderment. But whereas you spoke of guilt, I think it's more a sense of an intellectual paradox. Because in order to justify his own presence in this country, the white American has to understand the Negro's place, but to understand it fully, he has to make a gesture of imagination, morally—even religiously, in the deepest sense of the word; yet very often he is debased by his own culture and kept from making this gesture. But this is what happened again and again. This is what happened with the Civil War.

Let's put it this way: who in American history among the white writers or white men did make the fullest effort of imagination in your point of view?

It wasn't the Abolitionists; it wasn't Colonel Higginson, leading Negro troops in the Civil War. Who was it? Who would you say it was? I think it's been no one. I think it's a fight which has constantly been in process, constantly going on. But nowhere, in no particular

point in space and time can you say this has been understood fully and deeply.

HUGHES: To go back to Jimmy Baldwin's point, at the First Negro Writer's Conference, a year and a half ago, and published in *The American Negro Writer and His Roots*, is a speech by Julian Mayfield, one of our better young Negro novelists. Speaking of the examination of American values by American Negro writers, this is what he says:

"This new approach is suggested by the Negro mother, who having lost one of her sons in the Korean adventures, was heard to remark, 'I don't care if the Army is integrated, next time I want to know what kind of war my boy is being taken into.'

"In the same sense, the Negro writer is being very gently nudged toward a rather vague thing called the mainstream of American literature. This trend would also seem to be based on common sense. But before plunging into it, he owes it to the future of his art to analyze the contents of the American mainstream, to determine the full significance of his commitment to it.

"He may decide that though the music is sweet, he would rather play in another orchestra; or to place himself in the position of the black convict in *The Defiant Ones*, he may decide that he need not necessarily share the fate of his white companion, who after all proffers the hand of friendship a little late. The Negro writer may conclude that his best salvation lies in escaping the narrow national orbit, artistic, cultural and political, and soaring into the space of more universal experience."

HENTOFF: In this regard I'd like to bring up one further thing before we conclude, concerning the future.

In an otherwise rather strange book, *The Negro Novel in America*, by Boone, he has statistics showing that of 62 Negro novelists writing between 1853 and

1952, 40, or two-thirds, published only one novel, 11 more published only 2, and only 11 have published more than two.

Is this largely due to economic discrimination and the like, or is it due to a self-limitation to a single theme, which could only be expressed once?

HUGHES: My guess would be that it was largely due to the limitation of thematic material, and secondarily due to the fact of economics, due to the fact that the Negro people themselves, of whom there are now about 20 million in our country, have not one single publishing house.

We discussed a while ago, you remember, the limitation placed upon the number of Negro novels that can be published in a year.

The same thing is true in the theater. Do we have one serious Negro dramatic theater that belongs to us, that is managed by us, that is directed by us? No. The nearest thing we have to it is Karamu Theatre in Cleveland, which is a part of a settlement house. Formerly it was largely Negro attended, but it does such beautiful productions that now more than two-thirds of its personnel is white, because white people come from all over to work in Karamu. They used to do plays by Negro writers almost entirely, about Negro life, but not anymore. The trend is to integrate everything, so that you kill yourself with an integrated cast.

The trend toward integration in some cases, particularly in the folk field, in my opinion, can go too far, in that it is damaging artistically. For example, I narrated a Gospel song program in Chicago, a winter or two ago, with Mahalia Jackson, and do you know that the people who presented the program integrated the Gospel singers? Mahalia listened and gathered her fur coat about her at rehearsal, and went home with

the parting shot, "Y'all ain't got the beat."

There is a tendency at the moment, in jazz, to integrate every combo, which is wonderful, sociologically speaking. But very often the white players who may come into a combo, will not have that same beat, let us say, that Jonah Jones has, you know what I mean?

MISS HANSBERRY: Are we just skirting around a larger political question in an effort to avoid it, perhaps? Because, what are we faced with? We are faced with the fact that due to these 300 years of the experience of black people in the Western hemisphere—not only in the United States, though it was least successful in the United States—a possible difference of ultimate cultural attitudes now exists as a reality, so that in Mayfield's statement that you read just now, there are the tones of Negro nationalism, articulated in a far more sophisticated and pointed way than years ago. The question is openly being raised today among all Negro intellectuals, among all politically-conscious Negroes:—is it necessary to integrate oneself into a burning house? And we can't quite get away from it.

There are real and true things existing in the consciences of Negroes today which have to do with why, on two occasions, the American Negro delegate at the United Nations disassociated herself from her government, when we refused to vote for an Algerian Algeria, when we refused to vote for the end of colonialism. When the most compromised element in the Negro population, from which these people are drawn—I mean no offense personally to that lady, I don't even know who she is, but there is only a certain section of Negro life that is allowed to represent us—when they are moved to disassociate themselves in an international hall, and when 10,000 Negroes will come out to greet Fidel Castro

in Harlem and wave at him and cheer him everytime he shows his head, this is an indication of what is going on. This dichotomy is going to become more articulate and we are going to see it more and more in Negro literature.

HUGHES: I would like to say that in Lorraine Hansberry's play the thing that comes through is that, in spite of all these differences and difficulties, *this is our house*. That was their Chicago. This is our country. And I for one am intensely concerned and fascinated, by the things that go on here.

Some people have asked me why Richard Wright didn't come home and why he lived in Europe, and why some of our better Negro artists and writers are living over there. My feeling is that they have a perfect right to live wherever they want to, and to get away from the tensions of the American scene, if they wish. It just happens that it interests me, it doesn't upset me particularly. I like to indulge in these racial arguments and fights and discussions, such as we are having here, about what to do about, all this. And I stayed here and I live here because I like it, quite frankly, and I think that we can make out of our country something wonderful and quite beautiful, in which eventually we can even integrate Gospel songs and have them sung well.

CAPOUYA: I'd like to raise a question regarding the sit-in movements in the South. Certainly, a Negro ought to be able to eat where everybody else does; since he's a brother of mine, obviously, that's the first step, before I can be free to eat where I want, too.

But a couple of years ago, when the march on Washington was made, the Negro leaders were saying, "After all, you people are fighting for your lives, you're fighting against the Russians. Why don't you admit us to that status

of citizenship where we can help you? Why don't you admit us to the community so we can pull our weight?"

Well, that's a lot of nonsense as far as I'm concerned, and if that's what they're out to get, if they want to get atomized at the same time we do, we'll all be holding hands in Christian brotherly love when the bomb falls. Well, that is stupid.

I would be delighted if the Rev. Martin Luther King would think one step ahead of himself in this sense, and not feel that civil rights for Negroes in the South is the be-all and the end-all. It may be a tactical first step, but if it isn't to move to a higher plane, then I'm not interested.

HUGHES: Well, I heard Rev. Martin Luther King say at a meeting not long ago that perhaps it was the Negro's destiny to save America for itself. And another rather distinguished Negro leader disagreed and said, "Well, first, certainly, we've got to save it for ourselves."

BALDWIN: I'm delighted that we've got around to this very thorny area. It has always seemed to me that one of the great handicaps of this country in its dealings with the world is that it doesn't know anything about the rest of the world, not in the sense that a Frenchman doesn't know anything about China, but in the sense that it has always avoided knowing those things—I'm afraid you have to call them tragic or black or deep or mysterious or inexorable—which are at the very bottom of life.

One of the reasons that Cuba has been such a disaster is because people in America do not know that just down the road Mexicans and Cubans, and a whole lot of other people in a place called South America, are not only starving, which you can tell by statistics, but are living there. And they don't like to be mistreated. And one of the reasons that

we don't know this is our evasion in the world, which is exactly the evasion that we've made in this country for over 100 years, to date it only from the emancipation. Ultimately, it's a moral evasion of oneself, which really menaces—and this cannot be overstated—the very future of this country. That is why there is so little time to save this house; after all, one can always jump, that's not the problem. I don't want to be atomized with you or with anybody, and I don't want anybody else atomized, either.

But the price for American survival is really the most extraordinary and speedy metamorphosis, and I don't know if they're going to make it. But we've got to realize that when people say God, they don't always mean the Protestant God. There are people on the other side of the world, who have been worshipping somebody else for thousands and thousands of years. I do think that anybody who really cares about this must insist on nothing more or less than a moral revolution. Because nothing can be patched up. It's got to be remade.

CAPOUYA: That's so true, but I want to object to something said before, the notion of the white man's guilty secret, and that the Negro has got to be where he is because we have to know where the bottom of the heap is. That's not true: the Negro is where he is because of the long history of slavery, economic rejection, and so on.

HUGHES: At the moment I have a play which I hope will be on Broadway next season. The play was originally entirely about Negroes—about the Gospel churches. However, with the current trend towards integration, some backers said that they would not put money into an entirely Negro-cast play.

Well, the leading lady in my play, who makes a great deal of money out of selling holy water, worked up to having a chauffeur; in my script it never

occurred to me that he should be one color or another. I thought of him as a Negro chauffeur because most Negroes who can afford chauffeurs have Negro chauffeurs, but not all. However, when the demand came for integration of my cast, I said, "Well, always in white plays the chauffeurs are Negroes; let's make the chauffeur in my play white, which would not be untrue to life." Adam Powell, I believe, has a white or Japanese chauffeur. Jules Bledsoe, when he was star of "Showboat" had a white chauffeur, and when people asked him why he had a white chauffeur, he said, "So people can tell the chauffeur from myself." (LAUGHTER)

Well, at any rate, it's not too unusual that some colored people do have white chauffeurs and some have white maids, even in Harlem. And so I thought that would be nice and a little novel to Broadway. Let's have a white chauffeur. Do you know that everybody said, "Oh, the American public wouldn't accept that"? So my play is still not integrated.

MISS HANSBERRY: I gather we are close to conclusion, but, Mr. Kazin, I'd like to pick up something that you said, and to try and bring it up to date for myself.

You said, I thought rather beautifully, that the Negro question tends to go to the heart of various missorted American agonies, beginning with slavery itself. I am profoundly concerned that in these 100 years since the Civil War very few of our countrymen have really believed that their Federal Union and the defeat of the slavocracy and the negation of slavery as an institution is an admirable fact of American life. It is possible today to get enormous books that are coming out on the Civil War and go through to the back of them, and not find the word slavery, let alone Negro.

We've been trying very hard in Ameri-

ca to pretend that this greatest conflict didn't even have at its base the only issue that was significant. Person after person will write a book today and insist that slavery was not the issue. They tell you that it was fought for economic reasons, as if that economy were not based on slavery. People spend volumes discussing the battles of the Civil War and which army was crossing the river at five minutes to two and how their swords were hanging, but we have tried to get rid of the slavery issue. Ever since *Gone With the Wind*, it has been an accepted part of our culture to describe the slave system in terms of beautiful ladies in big fat dresses, screaming that their houses have been burned down by the awful Yankees. But when someone asked me to write 90 minutes of television drama on slavery, not a propaganda piece, but, I hope, a serious treatment of family relationships, by a slave-owning family and their slaves, this was considered controversial. This has never been done.

Those millions of Americans who went out only a month or two ago, presumably voted for a Federal president, but our culture does not really respect the fact that if the North had not won, if the Union forces had not triumphed over slavery, this country that we're talking about would exist only in imagination. Americans today are too ashamed and frightened to take a position even on this.

BALDWIN: Yes, this breaks the heart; this is the most sinister thing about it. Not that it happened, not that it's wrong, but that nobody wants to admit that it happened. And until this admission is made, nothing can be done.

KAZIN: How much time do we have?

HENTOFF: Is there anything you want to add?

KAZIN: We should begin the interview.

AN AIR OF GREATER FREEDOM

EMMANUEL MOUNIER

ONLY those men who are whole, do I allow to philosophize upon life.

To be a whole person is not merely to be sustained by a sufficient vitality; it is to love independence and self-control. People think that this is contrary to Christianity because Christianity culminates in a mystery of humility; but this humble self-capitulation is made only to the eternal, at the limit of human strength, like the surrender of those besieged defenders who, having held out beyond their last resources, only give up the arms falling from their hands, with the honors of war.

Would it be dangerous to draw attention, at least in so far as such an aspect of the Christian problem concerns us here, to the minimum of dignity of bearing which is as necessary to the spiritual life as the minimum of bread, and which subsists in an outstretched hand, even, a bent knee or a prostrated body? A great epoch, rich in heroism and austerity, as instant in nobility as brutality, too rich, even perhaps a little plethoric, like the high Middle Ages, demands that its clergy insist upon the relaxation of force, on the opened fist and the lowered sword, on the pardoning heart and the unremembered quarrel. Warriors more easily confound the service of God with the heat of battle, and spiritual victory with personal exploit, than they are tempted to slide from humility into cowardice, and from renunciation into spiritual vacuity. Perhaps we shall soon

see those times again, but so long as the forces of decadence remain dominant around us, the danger is not that of confounding the Christian impulse with an over-impetuous nature, but far rather of using Christian humility and obedience to excuse the enfeeblement of up-standing man.

*Our civilization does not make men proud.—So much the better.—Is it really so much the better?—I fear this “so much the better” came from some so-called liberal-minded Christian. I cannot describe the evasive tones, the wordy and indiscriminately proffered obsequiosities, the suavities and ambiguities of spiritual gesture, the clever knowledge of the unseen allusion and the equivocal *sous-entendu* which disfigure the Christian witness of our times. Independence and resolution are suspect. The uncommon is regarded as always more or less abnormal. All this, as has been often enough said, is part of the climate of the age. But should not the Christian atmosphere be more resistant than any other to this refusal to affirm oneself or anything else?*

We come back once more to certain defects in education. We must not, perhaps, lay too much blame upon a system of education which has managed to preserve a certain severe wisdom in face of the redoubtable ingenuities of an unregulated freedom scrawled-over with bad rousseauisms. But after all we are not obliged to inscribe our names in the diocese of Jansenius in order to escape from the parish of the savoyard Vicar. Current morality, in the wake of goodness knows what popular “isms,” has located sin in the duality: pride-sensuality. It is little enough. Of all his wounds, a being made in the image of

The accompanying article represents the last two chapters in Mounier's SPOIL OF THE VIOLENT, which has been appearing in CROSS CURRENTS this year. As in the earlier installments, italicized quotations are from Nietzsche.

God, and called to yield himself to divine transformation, can show none more lamentable than the denial of his own dignity. Pride has an attraction and perhaps a promise inadmissible to the servile taste for dependence and irresponsibility. Now this taste does not develop of its own accord. Dependence is the state of the young child. As he grows, he grows out of it, and learns either the exercise of liberty or how to dominate such dependencies as are inevitable. Authoritarian education sees it otherwise. It considers imposition the best method of communicating the ideas it esteems. How, then, is the child to learn *response*? His response is dictated to him sometimes to the very smallest detail of its execution. There is no place in his education for the progressive development of initiative, judgment, and command.

Thus do we render morality odious by making Christian life bow down in idolatry of the law. But read St. Paul. The law is an active power of sin;¹ it arouses sin, sustains and multiplies it: without the law "sin would have remained in the state of inertia, languor, and impotence."² Wherefore God hates it, and it shall altogether disappear: Christians are dead to the law, and the law is dead for them.³ Nailed to the Cross, it must be effaced from the human race; its disappearance is the condition of unity.⁴ This maturity will not be achieved so long as the effects of the Redemption are unconsummated, and between that consummation and now, the law keeps its value as a stage and a means: but it is rather like those convicts whom the police employ because of their trade, without their ever being able to buy back with their services the stigma which has marked them once and for all. Its mere power of intimidation, however, is not enough for some people. They require the reinforcement of terror. This is how a catechism in the

imagery of the pious press depicts Hell for little children.⁵

A devouring fire is the suffering common to all the damned, but each one of them suffers the pains appropriate to the sins he has committed. The impure are cruelly beaten by demons or torn by wild beasts. The envious are encoiled, bitten, eaten, by monstrous reptiles; gluttons and drunkards are devoured by cruel hunger and thirst and fed upon the gall of dragons and the venom of asp. The wrathful and the vindictive tear each other to pieces and wrench each other's hair out. The slothful are stabbed with flaming needles, stung by scorpions, clamped into everlasting braziers . . . etc.

Did the good man who wrote these horrors think of the overpowering effect such visions can produce in the poor little imaginations delivered over to his pious frenzies?

Even apart from such excesses, moral intimidation has a thousand ways of stunting its victims. It can spread, by systematic inhibition, a sort of emotional dullness over the whole spiritual life. The negative turn it gives the spirit persuades it that human prudence, detachment from the affairs of others, and non-intervention in the drama of the world, are better rules of life than daring and risk. The man who, throughout his upbringing, was first and foremost protected, continues to protect himself for the rest of his life. He no longer detests sin as an outrage upon love—he fears it as a social outrage, object of that reprobation which perpetuates in him the burning memory of the reprimand which even in childhood pressed upon his spiritual horizon. The aspect of this morality of moralists that is most to be feared, is its way of reducing the spiritual life to a formulary of conduct so meager that it dries up every spring whence such life could gush up. Its offence is not that it sustains the impulse

of generosity by progressive rules; for even the mystic does not dispense with rules; but that it upsets the due gradation of these rules; that it puts protection before love and a degraded caricature of Prudence above the theological virtues. *Ama et fac quod vis* does not mean: excite yourself emotionally and play the fool, but it does, nevertheless, mean that the absolute subordination of all the virtues, even sacrosanct prudence, to Charity, sets a slave at liberty and expands a life.

Better songs would they have to sing, for me to believe in their Saviour; more like saved ones would his disciples have to appear unto me! How is he to acquire this more liberated appearance, the poor young man besotted with advice? If he is not helped from outside, or if he does not explode in rebellion—a rebellion which will seem inexplicable and diabolical to many—his whole universe will be constructed in a context of intimidation. For not only do real authorities weigh upon him unduly; he turns every social relationship into an artificial and obsessive authority—the clerk behind his desk, the policeman at the street-corner, those he believes to be richer, better-known or cleverer than himself. Always and everywhere he is an inferior. Possibly an automatic order of society requires a great many citizens of this type, but that they form a living order is questionable. Politically, some become men of order, not because they love the power or the justice of order, but because they like to be ruled: this slave-mind explains the flabby weakness, the passive conservatism and the slightly dishonest respect for power which formerly distinguished the catholic moderate. Others pull on the reins a bit and think themselves more advanced, for the longer they have denied it, the more keenly is the desire for independence felt in this first gesture of emancipation. But,

though desired, autonomy is still all the while secretly feared as dangerous and even culpable. Therefore there is always something indefinably puerile in their audacities, something ungainly and awkward in the attitudes they strike and naïve in their obedience, with a tendency to anxiety when they find they have overstepped the liberties they take with venerable forms and accepted authorities. Sometimes, when they are apparently giving in to nothing, they submit as a last resort to the adversary; they are indeed easy-going and, as they say, liberal-minded, but from reluctance to resist evil and to meet force with force, rather than from understanding and self-control; they are the raw material of those short-lived third parties which flourish in periods of political antinomy and which have an evergreen attraction for eclectic, conciliatory and inoffensive souls.

The taste for passive dependence affects religious behavior as it affects public. Authoritarian imagery can disfigure ever the face of grace; let us not forget that jansenism was born into the country and the age which saw the simultaneous rebirth of the twin concepts of the absolute dominion of the king over his subjects and of the father over his children.

The misinterpretation, then, bears upon Christian obedience. Obedience is psychologically an ambiguous form of behavior. Psychoanalysts refuse to see anything in it but two forms of weakness: either the weakness of those who have not attained their full independence and are afraid of freedom of thought and action, or the weakness of those who, pained by the least disagreement with anyone, hasten to submit themselves to his orders to obtain his agreement. Much obedience can, no doubt, be ascribed to one or other of these abdications, and it is not uncom-

mon to find them in an impure form even at very high levels of obedience. But there does exist an obedience of a radically different nature. In this obedience, the giving up of certain prerogatives is subordinated to a firm self-mastery. It has indeed to overcome or circumvent in a hundred ways the resistance of self-love, and the difficulties of execution. This intelligent obedience is, unlike the other, says Pierre Janet, an act of a high degree of tension. Christian obedience, again, is situated on a yet higher level. It is the homage of a spiritual being to a spiritual being, offered in liberty and in love. The inextricable mixture of renunciation and initiative, of self-denudation and transfiguration of which it is composed and which heightens its paradox, must be experienced from within to be at all understood. It is not abjection but assumption. From a Suarez, theorist of Jesuit obedience, the most rigorous of catholic obediences,⁶ to a Francis de Sales, who seems to be set before the threshold of the jansenist age for the purpose of keeping the gaze of the classic Christian raised and clear, Christian opinion is unanimous.⁷ Catholic experience shifts our attention continually from subjectivity to objectivity, and from objectivity to subjectivity; from authority to liberty, and from liberty to authority. Our tastes may incline us towards one or the other of these terms, but outside the margin allowed by the Church to spiritual temperament we may not sacrifice one to the other. Now not only does liberalism consist in immolating authority to the spirit of rebellion and anarchy, but also, in its essential religious form, in renouncing, in passive conformism to the materialized order, the personal affirmation without which there is no Christian commitment.

Thanks to Pierre Janet, we are well acquainted with forms taken in weak

psyches by the need to be directed. They have a horror of solitude and initiative. They are always on the watch for an authoritative director of conscience, priest or doctor, to supply them with fully formulated opinions and ready-made decisions. This is all too often the conception the faithful have of direction of conscience, whether in their personal lives or their public activities. If they would but listen to the lesson of the great directors and the great pupils. Let the director be humble, demands St. Teresa, and let him not forget that sometimes his charges "have a more powerful Master than he, and are not without a superior."⁸ She added: "In everything, experience is necessary." She never admitted, in spite of her exceptional graces, that she could dispense with a director. But she chose him with discernment and gave advice to her sisters about this choice: he must not be of those who are content to teach how to crawl like toads and run like lizards; he must have a feeling for individual character; it was not a bad thing if he were a good theologian, but preferable that he should have sound judgment; she insisted upon his not concerning himself with knowing the ways of the spiritual life if he were not himself spiritually-minded; that he be humble before the soul he was directing; she chose neither those who attributed all her graces to God, when she knew herself to be tempted, nor those who rejected them *en bloc*, when she knew herself inspired;⁹ finally, even after St. Peter of Alcantara, she drew a boundary for them in her spiritual life: "None could inspire me with more fear or security than it pleased the Lord to put into my soul."¹⁰ How remote is this from that eagerness to renounce all initiative so characteristic of the sickly weaklings of the spiritual life! With Francis de Sales it is no longer the one directed but the director who outlines the de-

mands of liberty: "This respect" (for the Director), he wrote to Madame de Chantal, "should keep you in the line of holy conduct you have so happily adopted, but it should not worry you nor stifle the rightful *liberty* that the *Spirit of God* gives to them that are his own."¹¹ And now he puts his finger on the passive constrained element of intimidation which may enter into and disquiet Christian obedience; he writes her in capital letters: "EVERYTHING MUST BE DONE BY LOVE AND NOTHING BY FORCE; YOU MUST LOVE OBEDIENCE MORE THAN YOU FEAR DISOBEDIENCE."

I leave you the spirit of freedom, not the spirit which constrains obedience, for that is the liberty of the flesh, but the spirit which constrains constraint and scruple or over-eagerness.¹²

He imposes upon himself that disposition which St. Teresa required of a director:

And, now, look, my daughter, whenever necessary, or at least in anything I cannot well see the necessity of, do not take my words scrupulously exactly; for I do not want them to constrict you but that you should have freedom to do as you think best.¹³

Could there be a better indication that Christian unity, even in the visible order, rests on firmness of intention and not on repetition of actions, even though it needs discipline and external forms as well? To Mother Favre, Superior of the Visitation at Lyon, speaking of her daughters, he said also:

They must, if possible, be strengthened not to want to do everything that the others do, but only to want everything that the others want; in other words, not all to do the same exercises, excluding those of the Rule, but for each to act according to the gift of God. . . .¹⁴

Alas, the tang of this bracing climate

of freedom is somewhat mitigated among today's Christians, and even in the bosom of the Church. This decadence dates from the day when Christians and clerics became too rich and powerful. However, the historian who wrote a history of Christian liberty would not be reduced to writing it in the obscure margins of orthodoxy. He would follow it in the very heart of the Church, in those innumerable monks who so often in the early days of Christianity stood out against the combined temporal and spiritual powers; in St. Bernard, St. Anselm, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Thomas More, St. Joan of Arc and so many other witnesses to Christian independence. If Bernard Shaw saw Joan as a protestant, it was because he had no understanding of what orthodox liberty *within* the Church meant for her; that respectful pride and that sturdy humility which are found at the antipodes of muddle-headed feeling and propriety.

The same need for passive submission which operates before persons operates before events. I should hesitate to resume the old theme of Christian resignation were it, too, not rejuvenated by our modern knowledge of man. We now know how to isolate from the sense of suffering the morbid element which is very often mixed up with a taste for suffering: such is the case in a depressive temperament which needs suffering as a tonic and stimulant; in an unstable personality which requires it to attract interest to itself, and to give it in its own eyes an interest which otherwise escapes it; in an apathetic or an introvert temperament which prefers to enjoy misfortune passively rather than struggle actively with fate; in a psychic groveller whom the automatism of an inferiority complex has brought to the state of systematically choosing subordination and abjection. Distorted by all these grimaces, the face of suffering is not beau-

tiful. Moreover, Christianity is not a dolorism: it rejects complaisance in suffering as it rejects complaisance in guilt, seeing it as a return of self-respect and self-love, a variety of that *tristitia* or of that *acedia* which every religious moralist since Cassian has denounced as a devouring evil permeated with sin. That some ascetics were affected by it, is undeniable: monastic literature would not otherwise lay such stress upon its dangers. In addition to this, for the flesh is also a support in the uprush of the spirit, Christian resignation accepts the diminution brought about by suffering because it dismantles the fortresses of self-esteem and crushes whatever there may be of particularity and separatism in the will. But the weakening of a man can be of value only when borrowed from, as the prelude to an evaluation. The daring plunge into abjection is never abdication in face of the event, but humiliation before God alone. "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God," said the prophet, "than to dwell in the tents of the ungodly." The sense of being *before God* transfigures every situation. The eye of God raises up abjection even as it weighs it down. It has been no more than the means of abandoning indifference and of plunging into being by the night of being. In the experience of suffering it is not the crushed feelings which purify: they are only the dead weight of nature: it is the gaze of God upon our suffering and the love which comes to birth in us from this compassion together with the bursting strength wherewith it snaps the bands of our self-esteem. Thus, for ever tempted to shut itself in with its riches, even its spiritual riches, our inner life maintains itself in a state of generous readiness only by a continual coming and going of abasement and boldness. Foreshadowing the thought of a Scheler

or a Jaspers, St. Francis de Sales, writing to an unknown lady, said:

Continue bravely then to swallow up your courage in humility and to raise it up by love: for thus you will ascend and descend like the angels on Jacob's holy ladder.¹⁵

Even Charity, the flaming virtue, has been made use of to justify the enfeeblement of Christian energies. Here again a magnifying glass will help us to unmask the blasphemy.

We have sometimes happened to come across those "nervy" people in whom the need to love is at once so insistent, so disturbing and so injudicious that it seems almost a vulgarity or a disease. At first sight their ardor may be deceptive. If we become better acquainted with them we notice that their need to love is at the same time and primarily a need to be loved, and, even more, surrounded, to feel presence, help and warmth in their neighborhood, as if by this nearby radiation they wished to protect themselves from outside currents. There is something offensive even in their effusiveness and one very soon perceives that it is they themselves: they cling to their partner as a drowning man to his rescuer, and devour rather than endow their beloved with their affection. Their need to love is a vortex, self-centered upon an infirmity of the heart. They cannot tolerate solitude and independence. This weakness dressed up in the forms of love is extremely common. Inevitably, in such surroundings, the language of Christian love lent itself to sentimental compromises which it was instrumental in idealizing and disguising. Can it be denied that the sentimentality scattered about everywhere and on all occasions under pretext of charity and Christian fervor is too often no more than weak incapacity to support the burden of life and to bear the solitude of the Cross? *Your neighbor-love is*

your bad love of yourselves. If the Gospel calls attention to our neighbor, it is simply to test love at point-blank range and to avoid those vast abstract fervors unsupported by any real commitment. But the neighbor of the Gospel, once we have done our duty by the neighbor of our station in life—family, society, sphere of action—is not the man near at hand preferred as more amenable to the lazy requirements of our egocentricity, or more suitable for sealing the atmosphere of our life against calls from outside; it is *whatsoever man* we may meet upon our way: preferably the most "far-off" spiritually and spatially, the despised Samaritan on a road in the mountains, for that man, in an act of neighborly love, will snatch us from the progressive shrinkage of our love for our neighbor. The humblest Christian life beats with the pulse of the universal community; it breathes the air of great spaces alike in the little dressmaker's workroom and the local government official's office. To wish to build on the Christian sense of neighbor a systematic defense of parish-pump communities and limited societies, is to hang Christian strength and largeness on to *petit bourgeois* pusillanimity. Certain confessional circles are all too prone to confound evangelical brotherhood with a taste for little coteries, and to carry, even into political associations, under the pretext of giving them a family atmosphere, a domestic sentimentality which is as embarrassing spiritually as it is aesthetically.

This weakening of charity frequently originates in the family circle. There, the distance between man and man seems still too great, and any device which will reduce it is permissible. Instruction is given in how to wrap up any somewhat blunt affirmation in soft words, and in how to mask beneath conventional affabilities the real dramas

posed by every human community, no matter how closely linked. That need, under pretext of charity, not to contradict and not to be contradicted; not to cause suffering and not to suffer; to offend nothing and not to be offended, is a slow poison which sucks the strength from the heart drop by drop and causes it to lose the sense of affirmation, directness of vision and that taste for removal from one's usual surroundings which inures to the unexpectedness of life. The words of the Prophet, "out of strength came forth sweetness,"¹⁶ breathed in the ear of the antiprophet when he wrote: *Thus demands my love for the most remote ones: be not sparing of thy neighbor! and more pitilessly, more lovingly still: To create sufferings for oneself and for others in order to make them capable of the highest life, of the life of the conqueror.*

An outstretched hand, a proffered look, demand a man upstanding. Let our young Christians no longer be offered those looks with no steel in them, of which it is impossible to say whether they proffer or beg for love or goodness knows what sentiment half-way between offer and demand, between love and nothing. Let them learn to walk in the wind and alone. *When one is not enclosed and firm in one's own skin, one has nothing to give, one cannot hold out one's hand nor be of use as a prop or a stick.* We have been taught to have no enemies! Possibly to stand fast under their blows without detesting them greatly! The commandment to love our enemy? It tells me not to break the bond of the Body of Christ with my enemy; not, by my hatred, to drive him to despair, which I dispose of no more than I do of hope; not to judge, not to reprobate. But that evil, or error, or simply exorbitant interest that he serves, and, even more than this impersonal evil, the concrete nexus of responsible acts which

constitutes its inseparable carrier—that, I can and must detest by the ray of supernatural love. You must renounce Christianity if you wish to renounce these dialectic divisions of Christian feeling in order to reduce them to the graduated scale of convenient sentimentalities.

You have been told, have you not, that the violence of my words is an offense against charity. I have but one word to say in reply to your theologian. It is that Justice and Mercy are identical and consubstantial in their absolute form. That is what neither sentimentalists nor fanatics wish to understand. A doctrine which proposes the love of God as supreme end, has above all need of being virile, under pain of sanctioning every illusion of self-love or carnal love. It is too easy to emasculate souls by teaching them only the precept of cherishing their brothers, in contempt of all the other precepts which would be hidden from them. . . .

Now the Gospel contains some terrible threats and conclusions. In twenty places Jesus pronounces the anathema, not upon things but upon men whom he designates with terrifying precision. He gives his life none the less for all, but after leaving the command to 'speak upon the house-tops,' as He himself spoke. . . . I say that from this point of view, charity consists in shouting out loud and that real love should be implacable. But that supposes a virility nowadays so defunct that one can no longer even utter its name without outraging modesty.¹⁷

Not everyone, perhaps, has so lively a taste for shouting out loud as Bloy, but that is not the point. It is the Christian capacity for attack that is on trial. Taine's judgment on Louis XVI is well known. Politically, it is perhaps false, but psychologically and spiritually, profoundly true:

Systematically [he wrote] he extinguished in himself the animal instinct of resistance, that spark of anger which lights up in each of us under unjust and brutal attack; the Chris-

tian supplanted the king; he is no longer aware that it is his duty to be a man of the sword, that in surrendering himself he is surrendering the State, and in resigning himself like a sheep he is carrying all decent men with him to butchery.¹⁸

It is with charity as with chastity: *One must be capable of being an enemy*, said Nietzsche. One must be capable of it in order to go beyond it. If it was Nietzsche's madness to see goodness and virtue only under the aspects of weakness and ennui, it was in revenge against the mania so many virtuous people have of classing everything that manifests strength, power, affirmation, shock, as an evil. *Their conclusion is that only the emasculated man is virtuous.* His conclusion is that the pitiless savage is a man. Each is as good as the other, and the two are complementary. He who can no longer despise, can no longer adore. *I love the great despisers because they are the great adorers, and arrows of longing for the other shore.—What is the greatest thing ye can experience? It is the hour of great contempt. The hour in which even your happiness becometh loathsome unto you, and so also your reason and virtue.*

When an adult affects baby-talk, and when he is also a Mass-goer, he readily calls this tic the spirit of childhood. Ah! how welcome this mystique of the spirit of childhood is to mothers who do not want their eighteen-year-old sons to become men; what an opportunity it provides for using its authority to cover over those too-human feelings which it is so hard to acknowledge to oneself! How he loves to let himself be led "like a child," this grown man, burdened with responsibilities, so happy that somebody else should respond for him and that Providence should bear the blame for his faults! We know perfectly well, when we need to fall back upon our experienced childhood, the matrix of our life,

that ever-faithful refuge: it is when we are beaten by life and when, with all the lassitude of our hearts, we long to abandon the struggle. This return is human, touching, but let us not idealize it. Moreover, its consolations exist in only one world, the world of illusion. Sharp, sweet, childhood—careless, spontaneous, cared-for and light-hearted—is precisely our “never more,” the irrecoverable. Spiritual childhood infinitely surpasses these imperfect and inimitable graces; it is innocence never lost, or reconquered, simplicity of heart, uprush of feeling, gift of joy. But the innocence of the adult (that innocence which haunted Nietzsche, and which haunts modern naturalism like a lost paradise) can never wipe out the stains of time and the remorse of sin; the simplicity of the adult is won by long error, without miracles; and Grace alone, the Grace of the heights, sets the final grace upon the rejuvenation of the new man. These new graces are not false graces: “Be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.”¹⁹ Western Christianity’s reaction to calvinism, then to jansenism, and finally to modern rationalism, has imposed a puerile floridity of ornamentation upon its face which makes a silliness of the least spiritual theme. I do not know if it does, as it sometimes appears to do, come very close to heresy. In any case, it tends to make great boobies of Christian men, and that alone is enough to condemn it.

BEYOND

INDIVIDUALISM gives rise to the most confused arguments when its paradox has not been isolated; the paradox that, wholly concerned with the individual, it weakens him by the attitude it imposes on him and delivers him over disarmed to the forces of impersonality. One of

our most dangerous privileges is that of being able to look, dissipating in that looking our own reality and the reality of the things looked-at. The attention the individualist brings to bear upon himself is of this type; he looks at himself, he dissolves under his own gaze and thereafter this delicious dissolution becomes his sole object. The tendency to live in order to look is intimately linked with the tendency to live in order to be looked-at; the same passivity on the one side and the other; the same absorption in the spectacle presented or observed. The sort of people who are most concerned with their little so-called personal affairs are the most greedy of display: they are at the same time the most inconsistent. The creative person, on the contrary, lives wholly self extended, towards the world, towards others, towards the absolute. He finds himself undeliberately by constantly losing himself, and from contempt of self derives aggressive power and boldness.

The inefficacy of the Christian in the modern world, his declining aggressiveness and his depleted numbers in the ranks of the vanguard of action, are the direct result of the compression of the religious strength within him by the contractive effect of individualism. The individualization of the interior life and of piety and church life has become banal as a theme for lamentation. It turns the religious soul into a “looking-at” soul, a spectator soul, which thereafter becoming progressively more anemic, loses itself in the lower levels of religious sentiment, in complexities of feeling, the torment of scruples and spiritual hypochondria. For the historian, the literary window-display of conversions which flourished between the wars will remain one of the surest signs of our decadence. If I had to choose leaders for a Christian youth movement, I should like to put them this question,

point-blank: "Do you often think about the stars?", it being understood that I should previously have made certain that they think first about their feet. The stoic derived his strength from his awareness of being in league with the whole vast universe, and aristotelian man his balance from feeling himself placed at the center of the celestial revolutions. Pascal reeled before the disorder of the spheres and the infinite silence of disembowelled space. I am afraid that the individual Christian is absorbed in his own good works, tending his beautiful soul or his boy-scout troop, after carefully closing all doors and windows beyond the four square feet of his apostolate. He mistakes living in a hothouse for purity in the world.

To all this grand strategy of caution it is time to put a name: it is fear of freedom.

I shall long remember the shock it gave one to see in a neighboring country, shortly before the war, thousands of little posters which from wall to wall repeated:

PLAY SAFE: VOTE CATHOLIC

The gates of certain colleges particularly plastered with these bills were, alas, a persuasive commentary on them. Nineteen centuries have passed since the Jews of Thessalonica, dragging Joseph and his brethren before the rulers, presented them, saying: "These men have turned the universe upside down."²⁰ Nineteen centuries have passed since St. Paul wrote: "*Ubi autem Spiritus Domini, ibi libertas.*"²¹ Are nineteen centuries so long a time for the Christian memory? *I love those who do not wish to preserve themselves. The down-going ones do I love with mine entire love; for they go beyond.* Men afraid of leaping, that is what we have become, men brought up to mistrust leaping. Everyone else passes

by and we remain on the brink of the precipice of becoming. How are we going to teach ourselves anew the courage to jump at precisely those points where prudence stammers or keeps silence?

To begin at the beginning: the laity must be given back their physical courage. Just as I like to see young jockists thinking about the stars, so I like Father X to encourage a football team. A clean shot at goal is a first impulse towards the stars, a good way of bringing fresh air into over-confined interior lives. It is not entirely false to affirm that intelligence and spirituality are diseases of the body, in virtue of that dialectic which for any surpassing demands a temporary destruction, and, too, because life should not have too many irons in the fire. But there is a certain distance between this and erecting the category of limitation into a spiritual value, and measuring sanctity by pallor of face. Of the two aspects of force, endurance and attack, modern Christian education develops but the first, and that scarcely at all: it there is the least tendency to submission, a dozen forms of sloth are ready to encourage it. Weaklings and sugary sentimentalists try to make one believe, in the name of spirituality, that aggressiveness is always bad. But why? *This is my teaching: whoever wisheth to learn to fly one day, must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one doth not learn flying by flying!* Aggressiveness is an instinct, and there are no bad, there are only misused instincts. Initiative and moral courage need to be exercised. Whoever feels himself to be physically at the mercy of another man's insolence is deficient in the robust vigor needed to deny him his heart. If so many orthodox good people waver at the moment of taking right action, it is because they do not know how to jump a ditch or strike a blow. The man whose blood has never curdled, does not know

the meaning of Christian peace. Who never longs to fight for what he loves, only half-loves. Who has never known the sudden desire to kill, has but abstract ideas of Christian pardon.²² *Whoever aspires to become a guide to men must for long pass as their most-to-be-feared enemy.* To aim at repressing pride or ambition in a young man, no matter what the cost, is perhaps to stifle an apostle, and at the very least, and that not seldom, to mutilate a man. "Before bearing the image of man celestial, we should begin by bearing that of man terrestrial." Let Christian education apply itself to normalizing aggressiveness, to distributing it over a wide area, so that instead of exhausting itself in savage impulses, it animates the whole range of a man's activity; let the aim of education be to sublimate it bit by bit in self-dispossession, and to subdue it to the demands of fellowship; but let education beware, by a premature uprooting of this instinct, of tearing up with it the very matrix of spiritual strength.

Theologians of moral force are not afraid of emphasizing this physical aspect of daring. Intellectual cowardice itself is often traceable to fear of physical attack: weak ideas work through drawing-rooms; passionate ideas love to use fists. And if passionate Christianity does not rely for its propagation on the blow struck, it should normally expect to receive blows and be in no way deflected as a result. This realism is so substantial with theological thought that its presence passes almost unnoticed. We are now able to understand that doctrine of St. Thomas's, which is more than a banality, that the virtue of force has for its principal object the fear of bodily ill. And as, he adds, it is essential that virtue should be equal to its object, to the utmost limit of that object, force has for essential object, the fear of death.²³ Indifference to death is a mark of every

powerful civilization. Here is one more point of flagrant opposition between individualism and the sense of personality: the more highly personal a life, the more do the importance and power to terrify of physical death diminish in its eyes: the more careful an individuality is of itself, the more that disaster of the empiric I drowns it in anguish. If there is one spiritual attitude that, fully lived, leads to absolute contempt of death, it is indeed Christianity, Christianity which dates the birth of its saints from the day of their death. It is very poor psychology to pass judgment on the Inquisition without realizing that to a sincere inquisitor of the 13th century it was a generous act to send a man who persisted in living in darkness into a region of greater light. If this point of view seems to us today singularly lacking in the sense we have of the person, it does give us an exalted lesson in the hierarchy of values. The modern taste for individual life, a life made more and more precious by comfort, the decline in the number of births and the general weakening of the religious sense, has considerably altered this Christian feeling of joyous disdain of life and death. Like everyone else, the Christian wants at all costs to live. Like everyone else, he eventually finds himself unable to name a value or a being he prefers to life. And again like everyone else, like St. Peter, he says from time to time: "I know not this man," and from time to time, like Judas, he accepts the thirty pieces of silver.

Fear of extremism is only a form of this fear of death. Not, of course, that extremism is self-justificatory. We are well aware of the existence, even among Christians, of those different mentalities—the somewhat short-sighted who see truth only in poster letters, the restless who are receptive to it only in a state of intoxication, the monolithic who can grasp only one sharp fragment of it and

break all the rest to pieces with this potsherd, and finally those *philokindunoi* of whom St. Thomas speaks, those lovers of the perilous who rush towards danger no matter what its cause. Christianity cannot baptize these demented rather than daring follies, and must disown its sons, however ardent; yet it is this same Christianity which marries contraries and interweaves reality with a thousand blind forces, each one of which without its master-touch, would darken into self-exaggeration. But if the Christian attitude is at every minute a total hazard of all the lived in the eternal, the Christian solution is at every minute the most extreme solution, in this ultimate sense. "Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?" Such are the words of Ecclesiastes.²⁴ And our realists when they bring in General "Lesser Evil" to liquidate those battles from which they cannot extricate themselves, and then betray their spite by anathematizing the vanguard, if they make a lot of noise it is also partly to muffle the regretful longing for Christian extremism which inwardly torments them. "Because a cock has crowed too loudly they demand that there shall be only capons." In vain do they appeal to history, do they unfold before our eyes those edifying tableaux in which truth, a beautiful lady, wise and virtuous, advances from triumph to triumph along an always median road, while the foolish and the wicked wander on lonely pathways from aberration to aberration. These legends of a past which was vibrant and lived on the heights of anguish, are suitable for uplifting hearts and calming ambitions both somewhat green; we are not taken in by them. "Show me the great deed," wrote Stendhal, "that was not an *extreme* at the time it was undertaken. It is when it has been accomplished that it seems possible to ordinary beings."²⁵

If Christian extremism is hardly ever found in company with utopian extremism, it is because it is also an extremism of the Incarnation, cost what it may, and because it always chooses in reality and for reality. Realism as extremism, that is what the realists of compromise cannot admit. Nowhere in Nietzsche, perhaps, is there a more crying misinterpretation of the essence of Christianity than the one he makes here. Seeking an impulsive element in this religion which he believes to be the enemy of impulse, he finds it in an instinctive hatred of reality.²⁶ It is, alas, all too true that they have a holy dread of reality, those nice little fellows whom Cassian classed so kindly in the animal kingdom, and all those confined introverts of faith with their endless interior evasions. "Matter" for them becomes an abhorred symbol of all that is hard, resistant, exacting, and "materialism" serves them as an insult for any slightly brutal reminder of the indissoluble marriage between body and soul, axis of Christian anthropology. Accustomed as we are to more serious battles, can we still hear the indignant tones of that spiritualist eclecticism which was for a hundred years the officious spokesman of Christianity, as it denounced a new "materialism" in every profound exploration of modern science? Contemporary spirituality's aloofness contributed regularly to bringing this "materialism" to birth, but each time it happened it saw it only as the work of the devil. It was this kind of Christianity which delivered over to the devil what should have become, by its efforts, the inheritance of God. With many Christians is this abstention other than fear of the liturgy? For it is indeed a fear, so paradoxically common even in the midst of the catholic masses: fear of the eloquent gesture which rends space and blinds the eyes; fear of the splendor of things, as if the breath of the spirit were

so weak that it could not animate a powerful body. Is the spineless mysticism of the vague hinduisms and all the barren exaltations which so often serve as substitute for a lived religion, so entirely alien to our gourmets of particular devotions, sensational apparitions and extraordinary prophecies? These excursions into fragment gardens are infinitely more agreeable than effective involvement in a temperament, a setting, a time, which do not lend themselves to the protean fantasies of the pious dream.

There are a great many other sides to this holy flight from reality. Among young Christians of the best kind there still prevailed not long ago a somewhat haughty ill-humor with the idea of efficacy. It was considered indefinably American, and for ancient, disillusioned Europe failure seemed the supreme mystic value. Here again, confused psychological processes often underlay the best intentions. The morbid taste for failure is near relative to the morbid taste for guilt and submission and is as clever as the other at assuming a noble appearance. A certain way of aspiring to Christian witness without hope in an apocalyptic world does indeed respond to one aspect of Christian life, if it is clearly understood that the world was apocalyptic from the beginning of time; but, grossly projected from the spiritual on to the temporal and erected into a general pattern of action, this melancholy aspiration is chiefly witness to a defeatist spirit which leads us astray to the very antipodes of the apostolic spirit. The martyrs did not aim at martyrdom, at least not in this limp, despairing way. They were martyrs because it was all included in the bill. All this generous and somewhat sterile ardor to play the martyrs of the latter days is no more than the sublimation of a resentment, the resentment of the contemporary Christian world ascertaining that it has

let itself be outrun by the whole temporal development of the century—historical, political, revolutionary and scientific. It would be healthier and more Christian to try to make up the distance. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven?"

Anxiety for perfection or purity is one of the most deceptive forms of this illusion. "We must serve God," wrote St. Francis de Sales to a penitent passionate for the absolute, "in human fashion and in the mode of time, while looking forward to one day doing it in divine fashion and in the mode of eternity."²⁷ The buzzing eagerness of these desires for "a certain Christian perfection which can be imagined but not practiced, and which many give lectures on but which no one ever translates into actions,"²⁸ is the very opposite of Christian duty: "the least thing done is more useful than great desires for things remote from our power. God desiring of us rather fidelity in the small thing he puts in our power than ardor in the great which do not depend on us."²⁹ "We enjoy ourselves so much sometimes being good angels that we forget to be good men and women." And what is this angelical desire but the cleverest ruse of the instinct of inertia: ". . . If you can avoid excessive eagerness you will gain much: for it is one of the greatest traitors that devotion and true virtue can meet with. It makes a pretence of enkindling our zeal, but only to chill us, and it makes us run only to make us stumble." This diversion has two fronts for one same objective. To turn us away from Christian spirituality is to turn us from the spiritual incarnated, in other words, in the same movement from heaven and from earth. For we too are men of the earth: *When the center of gravity of life is placed not in life but in the beyond—in nothingness—then its center of gravity has been taken from life.* Yes, but

the gravity of the Christian world is *simultaneously* within life and beyond life: for the beyond is not a form of space outside our space, a time after our time; it is a personal Being present in our innermost self and through his Incarnation shining at the heart of the created world.

Poverty of faith and fear of living combined, slyly insinuate the most odious weapon of Christian feebleness: the lie of the right-minded, the *bien-pensants*. *Oh, those good ones! Good men never speak the truth. For the spirit thus to be good is a malady.* Truth for them is a thing learnt within the strict limits of tranquillity and utility. That it might be looked upon as an adventure irritates them. The Christian mystery is too huge for them, the Christian anguish too heavy. Nevertheless they desire the beneficence of certitude and the reassurance of the public triumph of faith. They love, too, the remnant of somnolent faith they still possess, for faith is always agreeable and they are not monsters, anything but monsters. But certitude without inquiry can be but make-believe: triumph without evidence can only be unnatural. Thus is born that lazy shortcut, that state of chronic, indefinable untruth which makes men say in non-Christian circles that the Christian microbe can live only in a confined atmosphere.

Fear of freedom, fear of truth and fear of living are closely linked in respect of a faith which claims to be the Way, the Truth and the Life. I like to underline particularly two notations in the thomist doctrine of force. The one relates force to amplitude and abundance; it "banishes avarice," said St. Ambrose, whom St. Thomas quotes, "as having power to effeminate virtue."³⁰ The other distinguishes magnanimity as a component of force.³¹ A secret bond is thus

affirmed which unites force to the splendor of the world and the generosity of the heart. It is more than Christian realism, it is Christian humanism in all its largeness that is born of this matrix. Force is of its nature at once the solidity and the abundance of all reality. Tension of being, it is the stuff of space. Patience of waiting, it is the stuff of time. Triumph over death, it is the servant of the eternal. Two kinds of men have attempted to restore it to this disintegrating world: the possessive man who tries to amass elusive space in his greedy hands; and the affirmative man who wants to restore to the human *fiat* its imperative authority. Their most recent avatars have been the capitalist and the anarchist. The one forgets the generosity of the heart, the other the solidity of things. They were sworn enemies in the last period of the modern world, perhaps because, the one throwing his bombs, and the other retaliating with his police, both felt themselves through this double paroxysm of order gone mad and violence in rebellion, slipping towards the same nihilism. In the one, the will to monopolize, for want of interior generosity, slowly extinguished the splendor of the world. In the other, the fervor of rebellion, for want of the sense of reality, culminated in the madness of nothingness. Already they are both being jostled aside by new forces which claim to reconcile ardor and realism, militant youth and the control of society, revolutionary scale of action and individual adventure. Christianity alone, perhaps, has the necessary stature and the magnanimity. . . .

But then let the sail be bent to the main-mast, and let the ship of the Faith, issuing out from the harbor where it lies rotting at anchor, sail before the wind towards the furthest star, indifferent to the darkness around it.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Romans 3:20.
- ² Prat: *La théologie de saint Paul*, I, 215 et seq.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 278.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 122 et seq., 270 et seq.
- ⁵ We hasten to say that this catechism has no official approval.
- ⁶ Quid enim dubitare potest, quin homo non ut brutum vel stolidus obedere debeat, sed ut homo qui recta ratione utatur? *De Religione Societatis Jesu*, IV, ch. XV.
- ⁷ See for instance his letter of October 9th, 1604, to Madame Bourgeois, Abbess of Le Fuits d'Orbe, in which he instructs her in the discretion to be exercised in drawing her daughters to obedience. He even advises her not to speak of obedience while teaching to obey.
- ⁸ *Autobiography*, ch. 34.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, ch. 40.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, ch. 13, 19; *Rel.*, p. 33, *Way of Perfection*, ch. V.
- ¹¹ *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. II of the letters, p. 279.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 359.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, III, p. 163.
- ¹⁴ *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. VII, p. 222.
- ¹⁵ *Lettres*, IV, p. 237.
- ¹⁶ Judges XIV, 14.
- ¹⁷ Léon Bloy: *Le désespéré*, p. 384.
- ¹⁸ *Origines de la France contemporaine*, II, p. 243.
- ¹⁹ I Corinthians XIV, 20.
- ²⁰ Acts XVII, I, 7.
- ²¹ II Corinthians 3:17.
- ²² That the virtue of force may make use of anger by regulating it: St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 123, a. 5.
- ²³ *Sum. Theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 123 a. 4 seq., q. 124, a. 7.
- ²⁴ Ecclesiastes VII, 17.
- ²⁵ *The Red and the Black*, Bk. II, ch. XI.
- ²⁶ Notably in *Antichrist*, passim.
- ²⁷ To Mlle. de Sulfour, *Lettres*, II, p. 167.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 202.
- ²⁹ To Mlle. de Sulfour, *Lettres*, II, p. 182.
- ³⁰ Quoted from *Sum. Theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 123, a. 2.
- ³¹ q. 129 and 134, a. 4.

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THE COMMONWEAL APPROACH

The editors of *The Commonweal* do not accept the philosophical principles of that continental "Liberalism" which was condemned by the Church, but the magazine's approach to day-to-day issues is frequently described as "liberal." The term itself, of course, is ambiguous and clouded with historical uncertainty, meaning one thing to one man and something quite different to another, and normally we hesitate to use it ourselves. We do, however, understand why people refer to us in this way and we accept the designation—although our "liberal" views on many questions strike us as more truly conservative than those advanced by most of the right-wing Catholic publications.

Be this as it may, the editors of this magazine clearly tend to be "liberal," not in the nineteenth-century European sense but in the modern American sense of the word. We are deeply committed to the idea of political democracy, and we have little patience with Catholic writers who discuss political questions as if nothing had happened between the French Revolution and the present. We value the American Constitution and oppose any interference with due process of law. We cherish our own civil liberties, and we defend those of others. We abhor anti-Semitism or racial discrimination in any form.

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THE COUNCIL, THE CHURCH, AND THE "OTHERS"¹

YVES M.-J. CONGAR

EVERYONE knows how marvellously fruitful the pontificate of Pius XII was, and yet we have heard the remark from several quarters that John XXIII dimmed the memory of Pius XII in a few days. When, in particular, on January 25, 1959, the new pope announced his intention to convene an ecumenical council, he excited throughout the world not only an immense interest but an inexpressible hope. Dr. Charles Malik, President of the United Nations General Assembly then, declared that "with its limitless possibilities" the council might well be the most important event of the twentieth century, or even of several centuries.²

This atmosphere of hope sprang in the first place from the fact that the Holy Father, in choosing to make the

announcement on the last day of the Week of Universal Prayer for Unity, expressly linked the Council with the problem of the unity of Christians. Scarcely launched, the *Pastor et Nauta* project took hold of the spirit of man, borne along by the powerful currents of aspiration, of need, of expectation of Christian unity. This effect was immediate, it was obvious. Another undercurrent, barely conscious but real and powerful, gave witness that the idea of a council, even the mere announcement of it, already meant a great deal. Romano Guardini had written these prophetic words in 1922: "A religious event of immense importance is moving towards realization. The Church is re-awakening in souls."³ He was excited about something quite apart from the cessation of a certain anti-clericalism, or the "Church's" undeniable regaining of influence and prestige in the world, because the "Church" in this latter instance meant above all the external, almost political authority of the high-level Administration in Rome. That which was awakening in souls was something much deeper: it was ecclesial⁴ awareness, the consciousness among the faithful of making up the *Ekklesia*, of being God's people, of accomplishing

¹ These pages constitute the text of a lecture given in Germany during Unity Week, 1960; hence the oral character of the style.

² *Narod*, Chicago, March 14, 1959 (quoted in *Irenikon*, 1959, p. 219).

Father Yves Congar, O.P., is one of the leading Catholic theologians of our time; recent books include *LAY PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH* (Newman) and *THE CHURCH, THE LAITY, AND THE WORLD* (Helicon).

The French text of this article originally appeared in a special issue of *LUMIÈRE ET VIE* (2, place Gailleton, Lyon 2, France; 5 times a year, 18 NF.) devoted to the background of the Ecumenical Council. *CROSS CURRENTS* has already published Fr. Congar's "Attitudes toward Reform in the Church" (Summer 1951), and "Vrai et fausse réforme" (Summer 1953).

³ *Der Sinn der Kirche*, p. 1.

⁴ It was quite necessary to adopt this word as the adjective corresponding to *Ekklesia*. Certainly something other than "ecclesiastic" was called for! Father H. De Lubac, who did much to initiate its usage, defends his "néologisme" (*Méditation sur l'Eglise*, 1953, p. 18, n. 28) against his critics (L. Bouyer, in *Dieu vivant*, no. 19, 1951, p. 88, n. 1). But it is not even a new term: Bossuet used the term "*communio ecclesiastica*" (cf. G.-A. Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, p. 667).

His purpose in the world. Vaguely, instinctively, the faithful felt that the forthcoming council was to some degree *theirs*, and that at the Council in some way the *Ekklesià* would have its say. . . .

There was some confusion at first. This stemmed largely from two causes. In the first place, from the climate of optimism which surrounded the pontifical announcement, by reason of its timing. Some were misled as to the meaning of certain terms in the announcement: the council, it said, "does not aim solely, in the view of the Holy Father, at the spiritual good of Christians, but it would like to be as well an invitation to the separated communions to seek again that unity to which so many souls aspire today in all parts of the world."⁵ "Invitation": one concluded that non-Catholics would be in one way or another invited to come and to talk things over.⁶ The Holy Father's appeal was read in the perspective of ecumenicism. In the second place, moreover, the very adjective "ecumenical" is confusing, at least in French: not of itself, in its classic usage within the Church over the last fifteen centuries, but by reason of the "Ecumenical Movement" and of the "World Council of Churches," of which the international press has often spoken. The word used, in fact, is the same, and not without reason. This is natural: standing by itself it means simply, worldwide, concerning or comprising the entire inhabited world. Everything, then, depends on the reality which it qualifies. An ecumenical council is the representative assembly of the Catholic Church as it exists in the entire world. The Ecumenical Movement, of which the World Council of Churches constitutes the framework

and function, is worldwide by virtue of those who participate in it, by virtue of its aim of Christian unity, by virtue of the responsibility it wishes to assume of spreading the Gospel throughout the entire world. These are two world-wides which coexist without coming in touch with one another. Actually the ambiguity of terms is significant. There exist two quantitatively incomplete ecumenicities. The problem lies in making them meet, recognize and fuse with one another.

Analysis of the Situation

THE OLD CATEGORIES of "heresy," "schism," "return," certainly still have value. It would not be difficult to demonstrate and to justify them. Yet they do not embrace certain *real* aspects of that with which we find ourselves confronted when we seek to take to ourselves in a Christian manner the spiritually divided world which history has bequeathed to us and in which God calls us to serve Him.

Following a lecture I delivered to the Catholic Students of Strasbourg on the ecumenical problem, I asked, as is the custom, if there were any questions. A big fellow rose and in a resonant voice asked: "Could you tell me what meaning the Reformation has in the Divine Plan?" It was a good question. Difficult. I do not think a young Catholic would have asked it some fifty years ago, because it presupposes not only that one think in terms of God's plan and the history of salvation (a mode of thought which is the fruit of both the renewed interest in things biblical and Catholic Action), but it also presupposes that beyond a denunciation of the Reformation or any other great Christian dissension (a denunciation which could be both simplistic and profound) a question is raised which this condemnation does not resolve. The Reformation, or the rup-

⁵ *Doc. cathol.*, 1959, col. 198. Compare the text of the encyclical of June 29, quoted *infra*.

⁶ All ambiguity would have been avoided by translating "invite."

ture between the East and the Roman West, are historic realities, great movements which have a historic meaning with regard to certain developments, to certain historical situations in which the Church has found herself or finds herself still. To abstract from these realities a certain number of propositions bearing on questions of doctrine or Church government in order to qualify them dogmatically and canonically is legitimate, but it does not do justice to what is involved. The Reformation is a concrete reality, inseparable from its historical significance. We must acknowledge that this is a course which the Catholic Church as a body has not pursued; there have only been individual attempts—and then not too frequent—principally in our times.

I once saw a painting representing the Catholic Church in the form of a powerful centuries-old tree. Each century of its existence, the tree produced magnificent fruitful branches: the great missionary movements, the religious orders, theological geniuses, and saints. But each century, too, it lost some branches. These bore the names of the great heretics: Arius, Sabellius . . . and also Photius, Luther, Calvin. Struck from the tree these branches fell in flames, where frightful demons took care of them.

Does this triumphantly apologetic representation correspond to reality? Is it true, as some books assert, that dissenting Christian bodies have remained sterile? Have they remained fixed, as they were, somewhat as fragments of a bomb lie lifeless in the field where they were scattered? Apparently not. The apologetic does not fail to emphasize the fact that they presumably went from one defeat to another, but the reality, if one wishes to see it as it is, presents also other aspects, positive aspects, some positive fruits of missionary work or evangelization, of religious thought, of Chris-

tian life. Can one ignore this positive Christian value, content to criticize certain deviations, certain impoverishments? It seems to me that this is becoming more and more difficult. And from this very fact we must draw the consequences.

If one wants to see things in a real light, the dissenting Christian groups must not be separated from a still larger whole. Basically, one of the principal demands of our time, quite new in relation to preceding epochs, is the demand to return to a Christian and theological way of thinking in dealing not only with principles and theories but also with *historical realities such as these*: the Church in her concrete life, the missions in their concrete work in the world, the great spiritually dissenting groups in their reality and their historical significance.

For centuries the Catholic Church was the sole spiritual world of men. She alone offered that complex of ideas and values in which man could seek, for himself and for others, the meaning of his striving on the earth. Or better, over a long period the Church gave men all culture, all hope which could elevate them, all the beauty with which the grayness of days was brightened.

Under these conditions the Church could be content to exist in itself, without troubling itself very much about those who left. Existing only in itself, it judged others only in relation to itself, in the strictest and most literal fashion, not considering the initiation of any dialogue other than polemical and more or less aggressively apologetic ones. That is legitimate, within the framework of a due respect for personal liberty, because it is necessary to the plan of dogmatic affirmation in the face of error, and to combat error squarely. But Christians today demand something else *besides*: because the "Others" for them today exist

in a new way, not only in a negative fashion, as separated from the Holy Church, but positively, as subjects and spiritual beings and therefore as the other end of a dialogue, even on religious matters.

This awakening to the existence of "Others," this need to take an interest in them, is one of the most characteristic traits of the present generation of Christians. In youth congresses, in the course of the pilgrimage to Chartres, and elsewhere, the same questions are raised again and again: the salvation of non-Catholics, other religions, my companions—why do I believe and they not? We are all so entangled, so close, so bound together today: Tokyo is 36 hours from Paris, and every day I can see on the movie or TV screen what has happened in New Delhi or Dakar. Studying, working, I invariably find as my companions a Protestant, a Jew, a few Communists, some "laïcs," in the French ideological sense of the word, and several who are indifferent, practical atheists or Palm Sunday and All Souls Day Catholics. Inevitably there are conversations, and I ask myself some questions. I experience—and this makes me a different person—the existence of *spiritual* worlds other than my own. "Spiritual" is well chosen—with their spiritual motivations, their depth. Their errors, of course, as well, but the significance of the "Others," the experience of the existence of other worlds, affords some dramatic sense of history, lacking at times in our dogmatic assurance.

Does it not seem that the Christians of today, and not through indifference but in direct proportion as they are convinced and devout,⁷ have a religious

awareness which looks not only from the depths toward the heights, toward their dogmatic and hierarchic references, but to right and left as well, close at hand and at a distance: this man at my side, whose glance aims at my heart, what does he represent for my faith in God's eyes? Currents of ideas of a rather philosophic nature, too, converge upon us, prodding us in that direction.⁸ It is in this context that we must see the great dissenting Christian groups which are preëminently spiritual worlds.

An acute consciousness of these worlds and contact with them leads Christians of today to think of their Christianity and their Church not only in themselves but also in the rapport they have to others and which others can have to them. It appears to them that the Church can no longer be satisfied to exist within itself, without concern for other men, for other worlds: it must exist as outside of itself and consider theologically, historically, apostolically, its relation to others. It is a fact that often good Catholics are scandalized to learn of the behavior of Catholics or even of the Church in other countries where spiritual unanimity has supposed-

⁸ Current philosophy, doubtlessly because it takes into consideration man as existing and the conditions of human existence, also demonstrates and in more than one way that the mind tends by its very nature toward dialogue. The monologue brings with it the risk of sterility. If we were always in agreement, if disagreement were not permitted, we would be contemplating our own self, a self which would be as poor as it is solitary, incapable of self-realization. We would hear but the echo of our own affirmations. Man realizes himself only in a dialogue with the world and with other men.

It is obvious that these interesting philosophical views cannot be applied as they are to the Faith, because the latter is not a human principle, neither by virtue of its revealed and transmitted object, nor by virtue of its subjective quality of grace and of virtue. But they can be applied to a certain extent to our religious representations, on a theological level.

⁷ In a survey by the I.F.O.P., 60% of the youth between the ages of 18 and 30 answered yes to the question: Can a member of another religion be saved? Among them 80% are devout Catholics. (*Inform. cathol. internat.*, Dec. 15, 1958, p. 18.)

ly been preserved and where the Church, enjoying a position of prestige and power, presents an intolerant and solitary aspect. There is much to be said on the question and each country must be understood in the light of its history, its problems, its spiritual resources. I would not judge hastily. But noticing discomfort at this point on the part of many Catholics, I would say this: it is troubling to find Christians who have not entered into an attitude of dialogue. This is an obstacle to the certain acquisition of an experience we may call beneficial, or in any case necessary.

It would not be difficult to place the experience of which I speak theologically. For my part, I would do it within the framework of a distinction I believe to be extremely fertile.

The Church is something more than a mode of sanctity; she has a mission for the world. She was set up first of all by an act of God, or a series of acts of God, as a divine institution, at one and the same time a complex of the means of salvation—Revelation, sacraments, powers of the apostolic ministry—and as Life in the supernatural communion with God, through His grace, built on faith. Thus the Church exists in itself and on high as an institution of positive divine law. It is more than the spiritual agency of countries with a Christian tradition, more than the higher meaning of history and the world. It is a consecrated order set apart, not deriving from the powers of this world. But at the same time this Church does not exist for itself. It exists in itself, yes, but not for itself: it is essential that it have a mission for the world, that it bear responsibility for the world. We must not dwell upon the distinction—no matter how real—between the Church and the world, a distinction uniquely well-founded, as I have said, like the duality of two independent powers. This separateness must be com-

plemented by the Church's mission and responsibility. We must not envision the Church and the world side by side, like a bishop and a prefect going down the same street, each looking at the other out of the corner of his eye, but rather as face to face. The Church is not simply the inn of the Good Samaritan for a wounded world, it is the Good Samaritan himself in the act of picking up the injured man from the ground and carrying him on his back.⁹ For a world which has gone beyond its depth and is drowning, the Church is not merely an onlooker who sits tranquilly in his boat and exhorts the drowning man to make a good Act of Contrition: it is the rescuer who struggles to bring the foundering man back to shore and who will not leave him until he has been revived.

Under these conditions one understands how solicitude for the "Others" enters into the Catholic perspective. We are bound to them. But the images I have used to make my few words comprehensible run the risk of disorienting what I want to say. No mission is simply and solely a rescue operation. Every mission implies in one fashion or another communion and dialogue. Every mission involves the Church in *being with* men, in the plenitude of Jesus Christ. Since the fate of these "Others," Christians of other communions, is at stake, it is obvious that our mission, our responsibility as Christians and as the Church, if it is to be dominated by the idea of the plenitude of Christ, must be entirely loyal to the specifics of the problem: the historical significance of the dissenters

⁹ Bernanos: "The Church is in effect a movement, a force in motion, even though many of the devout have the appearance of believing, pretend to believe, that it is only a shelter, a kind of spiritual inn through whose windows one can enjoy watching the passers-by, the people on the outside, those who do not dwell in the inn, trudging through the mud . . ." (*La liberté, pourquoi faire?*, p. 267.)

in question, those elements of the salvation of Jesus Christ which they conserve and practice, respect not only for human loyalty but also for gifts received from God, etc. It is a question of the reconciliation of separated brothers. The function of dialogue must be altogether personal and specific.

The distinction and the sort of dialectic between the Church as a sacred order set apart and as a mission to the Others demonstrates a general characteristic of the history of the Church. This history is revealed to us as oscillation between moments in which the Church has concentrated on itself or a return to the sources of its tradition, and moments of expansion or of initiative towards the world. The history of the Councils illustrates this in particular. They are themselves moments in which the Church draws into itself and questions its tradition. But this is in order to be able to respond to a question of the world. And, in fact, the great councils have often been the origin of a very remarkable renewal of the pastoral life of the Church, or else of its proper function as the bearer of the tidings. This applies to the fourth Lateran Council, the Council of Trent, and the Vatican Council.

The Nature of Councils

WE MUST FIRST of all emphasize the fact that Councils are internal affairs of the Church. I would say, in German, "ein katholisches Anliegen," "eine katholische Angelegenheit." A council is an assembly of the Church, called by the spiritual heads thereof, in which individual communities are incorporated, personalized, and in this sense represented; gathered together at a moment when the Catholic conscience is troubled, faced with particularly grave problems of general interest, it formulates the faith of the Church or the positions of the Church.

The coming Council will be without a doubt just that. It would be absolutely fantastic to think that it could be an occasion for discussion between Catholics and the "Others." A council is not a conference. The objectives which it will pursue will not be fixed in detail until the responses to 2,700 letters sent from Rome to consult the Christian world on the subject will have been received and studied. As of now, the following great aims have been indicated:

—The search for that which will best correspond to the urgent needs of today's apostolate. (John XXIII, April 23, 1959.)

—The principal aim of the Council will consist in promoting the development of the Catholic faith, the moral renewal of the Christian life of the faithful, the adaptation of ecclesiastical discipline to the needs and methods of our times. (Encyclical *Ad Petri cathedram*, June 29, 1959: *Doc. cath.*, col 907.)

—We intend to prepare for the council by seeking out the most necessary elements to bind together and revitalize the organization of the Catholic Church. After having completed this unwieldy task, eliminating that which could be an obstacle to more rapid progress, we will present the Church in all its grandeur, "without spot or blemish," and we will say to our separated Orthodox, Protestant and other brothers, "See, brothers, this is the Church of Christ. We have endeavored to be faithful to Him, to ask of the Lord the grace to make the Church what He wanted it to be. Come, come: this is the road of encounter, the road of return; come take or retake your place here; for many of you it is the place of your fathers." (Aug. 9, 1959: *Doc. cath.*, col. 1099.)

—The principal end of the forthcoming ecumenical council will be to

strengthen the ties of the Catholic Church; it will not occupy itself with an eventual union of the Catholic and Orthodox churches. Only later can the question of an accord between the other churches be raised. (Cardinal Tisserant, Declaration to the Italian Agency *Ansa*, Aug. 25, 1959.)

Nevertheless, we must not conceive of this *ecclesiastic* nature of the councils in too inflexible a fashion. The facts show that two things are manifested in councils: an essential characteristic of the Church, its corporate aspect, and also something of the historic life of the Church. I mean that if the corporate aspect which expresses itself is essential to the Church, there is no form of council which is given by divine right, nor even by apostolic right. Even in institutions of divine right, moreover, there is an unchangeable core and there are variable historical modalities: it is not essential to the Primacy of Peter that the Holy See be in possession of its own independent territory, nor that it appoint bishops; history has known other modalities. In the same way she has known an autonomous local episcopacy before a monarchic episcopacy, and in Ireland up to the twelfth century or among the Maronites she has known a non-diocesan organizational structure.

In the same way, history has known more than one type of council: ecumenical councils called by and sometimes even presided over by the emperor; councils of national churches of converted barbaric peoples, as for example that of Visigoth Spain in the seventh century; representative councils of Christianity in the Middle Ages; Councils of the Diocese of Rome having an almost universal value due to the presence of the Pope and of the presence of prelates from outside the metropolitan jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome; purely ecclesiastical and dogmatic councils such as the Vati-

can Council and, in fact, the Council of Trent.

History has also witnessed several councils of union. At Lyons, in 1274, the Greeks were represented principally, even exclusively, by their Basileus—incorporating or personifying the Christian people—and there was no discussion. But at the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438-1439 there was sustained dogmatic discussion of the principal points at issue between the Eastern Church and the Roman Church: a real dialogue of theologians with theologians, even hierarchy with hierarchy. The Greeks were treated as equals: this is a historical fact, and of great importance.¹⁰ The Protestants were invited to come to the Council of Trent to explain their position. Unhappily, political circumstances hindered their coming in any truly representative fashion and deprived the debate of the amplitude demanded by the immense importance of the doctrinal points in question.

The Orthodox hierarchies had been invited to the Vatican Council. It had been foreseen that if (following interpretations for which the Council of Florence had evidently furnished the bases) the bishops should join with the Roman See, they would be seated as Catholic bishops and therefore as judges of the faith, with the others, for the remainder of the Council. Unhappily the psychological preparation was insufficient; the invitation was sent under very unhappy circumstances; the Roman faction was excessively preoccupied with the preservation of pontifical power. No one from the Orthodox world came. Nothing developed.

All of this demonstrates that while Councils are internal affairs of the Church, they are still capable of great flexibility and may take a very large

¹⁰ See J. Gill, S.J., *The Council of Florence*, Cambridge, 1959.

variety of forms. It is perfectly conceivable that, as regards the cause of Christian unity, the new Council could invent forms of confrontation and conversation which, till now untried, would come into being because of the immensity and the urgency of the task and because of the point at which—that too unknown until now—the ecumenical effort finds itself in the world today.

What is possible? Or rather,

What Can We Hope for from the Forthcoming Council from the Point of View of Necessary Dialogue and the Pressing Need for Christian Unity?

NOT THAT non-Catholics participate as members. The Council will be an assembly of the Catholic Church, not a conference for interfaith discussions, much less the moment for negotiations on unification. Nevertheless we may expect from it great steps forward on the road toward those things which are themselves stages in the re-memberment of Christendom. On this subject I should like to develop four points:

1) If the mere announcement of the council stirred up opinion on this point, the fact that a council is being held is of very great ecclesiological importance. One could have thought, in effect, in view of the promulgation of the dogma of papal infallibility and the position pontifical authority has assumed in Catholic life, that councils would be henceforth without purpose.¹¹ One could have felt that the idea or the conscience of the Church, for us, is formed in and emanates exclusively from its Roman center. If it is true, as I believe after ten years of study and verification, that

¹¹ Some have thought and said this, and not only in criticism (as far back as Luther, *Appeal to the German Nation*, translated by Gravier, p. 83 and 139) but also with admiration for the papacy (for example, J. Neuvéglise, "Eglise, capitale Vatican," N.R.F., 1954, p. 36, 205-206).

the whole ecclesiological history of Catholicism is dominated by a sort of tension or of coming-and-going between two poles, Pope and Church, we might ask ourselves if the first of these poles has not completely absorbed the second: somewhat in the manner in which in the apostolic foundation of the Church of Rome, Peter absorbed Paul.¹² Will the Church be but the passive recipient of decisions transmitted with authority by its head, or will it again come alive, certainly not cut off from this visible head, but transmitting something to him as well? Will the life of the Church have a structure designed for monologue or one designed for dialogue?

During the years 1950-1952, while I was working on my *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcité*, I was struck by two inseparable and complementary facts: on one hand, the essential hierarchic structure of the Church; on the other, the corporate character of its concrete rules of life. This is borne out in the domain of each of the sacerdotal functions, royal and prophetic, as well as in the apostolic life of the Church, which involves the three functions. Councils are not the only expression of the corporate nature of the Church, but they are one of the principal and most traditional.

But not only might the simple fact of the council be—and I think it will be—the occasion for a revitalization of this value in our ecclesiological conscience, but the council itself might well be called upon to prevent a certain unilateralism existing in current *De Ecclesia* theology. It is often said that one of the Council's theological tasks will consist in picking up the *De Ecclesia* doctrine where the Vatican Council left off. It is known that that council had effectively prepared a "*Schema De Ecclesia*" which allowed not only for the articles

¹² Harnack had seen something of this: *Dogmengesch.*, vol. 3, 3rd edition, p. 420.

on the pontifical primacy and infallibility (the only ones which were discussed, later proclaimed under the title of "*Prima Constitutio De Ecclesia*") but also a section on the episcopate and one on the missions. History does not permit us to be too optimistic on the exact text of these sections, much less on their first form. One could do noticeably better today with the article on the episcopate, thanks to a sort of reconstruction demanded by events and above all by the appearance of Catholic Action groups, organized in each country on a national plan. But it is above all the section on the missions which could be extraordinarily modified, because the Vatican Council was held in a period antedating native clerics and episcopates, prior to the great anti-colonialist, anti-paternalist movements which characterize our epoch. And, moreover, in the last twenty years we have become widely conscious of a fact of prime importance: that Church and mission are inseparable and co-extensive realities. Likewise, we now see more clearly how these two realities are inscribed on the interval between Pentecost and Parousia, as well as their eschatological meaning.

But a completely new section must be written today: a chapter *De Laicis*. It cannot be prepared solely according to the plan of special studies: historical, theological, canonical. It is in the living flesh of the Church, by virtue of the very existence of a laity and by virtue of our experience with the role it must assume. It is not simply a question of defining once again the *canonical* position of the layman by relating it on one hand to the clergy and the hierarchic priesthood, and on the other hand to the religious life separated from the world or in the world. It is a question of defining the place and the task of laymen both within the sacred order of the Church (the Church as a sacred order set apart) and

in the Church's responsibility in the world (its mission).

It is clear that in all of this ecclesiology will develop the reality, the vitality of the *Ecclesia* pole, in organic union and in dialogue with the *Papal* pole, so strongly asserted at the Vatican Council. *Urbs et Orbis*.

2) Everything points to the probability that the coming council will have a very marked *pastoral* orientation. The direction of the pontificate of John XXIII; the problem posed, so widespread and so pressing; the fact that the council was preceded by a Synod of the Diocese of Rome, which opened January 25, 1960, in the course of which some very grave pastoral problems were attacked. I personally would be inclined to think, certainly without prophetic pretensions, that the council, dominated by the perspective of union and by preoccupations of the pastoral and missionary order, will be called upon to grapple with only such doctrinal questions as are in effect bound up with ecumenical, pastoral and missionary problems.

The Vatican Council dealt with the question of Faith and Reason, the great question of the nineteenth century, from a very intellectual, or if you prefer, a very doctrinal point of view. Finding itself in the presence of the first manifestations of modern rationalism insofar as it represents, from that point on, a social reality, one could even say a mass reality, it considered, in brief, only its *philosophical* causes or roots: it confined itself to the intellectual order. These are very real causes, but we have today become much more conscious of the decisive character of causes in the *social* order. There seems little doubt that this council will confront them, and that it will proclaim in the most positive, kerygmatic, apostolic fashion the conviction and the urgent needs of the Faith.

3) We Catholic ecumenists can and do hope that the central agencies of the Church will institute methods adapted to the new requirements of information, contact and dialogue; in brief, to accord to the "Others" the respect due to them. Certainly there is the Propagation of the Faith, whose foundation Pius XI, on the occasion of its 300th anniversary in 1922, called "an admirable and truly divine Pentecost." It is the office with apostolic responsibility for those "Others" who must be evangelized: the famed "thousand million pagans" of our missionary propaganda, today surpassing that figure more and more rapidly each day, because today one man in four is Chinese and it is said that a Chinese baby is born every second. But then *one Christian out of every two is not Catholic*. Which among the central agencies of the Church is dedicated to knowing the "Others" who acknowledge, as we do, Jesus Christ as their Savior, God and Lord?

There is, to be sure, the office of the Secretary of State, which is kept well-informed on movements all over the world, but that information, while very valuable in itself, is not positively directed towards dialogue and reconciliation. There is the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office, in whose province lies the surveillance of all that concerns doctrine and therefore obviously that which concerns relations between Catholics and non-Catholics. The Instruction *Ecclesia Catholica* of December 20, 1949, regulating the ecumenical activity of Catholics, was published by the Holy Office, but by virtue of the very nature of its mission, the latter treats ecumenism only from the point of view of rigorous orthodoxy and concern for the strict prudence of Catholic activities. It is designed not to promote but to keep watch. Without a doubt the evi-

dence which it examines and of which it makes use corresponds with that intention.

There is in Rome, finally, a Congregation for the Eastern Church. It was created by Pius IX in 1862, within the framework of the Propagation of the Faith; it was granted autonomy in 1917 under Benedict XV. Shortly thereafter, a special Commission for Russia came into being which received its autonomy in 1930, to be later re-attached to the Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs (1934). But the Congregation for the Eastern Church, in principle, deals only with those Eastern Christians in communion with Rome. To be sure, it cannot help but touch upon many of the problems of Orthodox believers, as does the Commission for the Editing of the Code of Eastern Canonical Law, but it is not formally an agency or instrument for contact with the "Others" of the Eastern Church.

Apparently we lack, in the Roman center of the Catholic Church, an office whose province is precisely the necessary dialogue with other Christians. The creation of such an agency would appear to be a normal, one might even say an inevitable step, when one considers how offices at first indistinct in the heart of a larger unit, have invariably become progressively more autonomous. The specialization of functions, the adaptation of organs, is the very law of life. And life always triumphs!

Now one thing is certain: there would be no need of a council to create such an office. In the same way, no council would be needed to adapt, to relax certain canonical or jurisprudential regulations currently in force with respect to relations between Orthodox believers and Catholics, or with respect to the participation of Catholic theologians in relevant activities of the World Coun-

cil of Churches.¹³ This also could be accomplished by the *ordinary* authority of the Holy See. But the council may be the occasion for such creations and adaptations when it dedicates itself, sooner or later, to the task of unity. It will, in effect, be the occasion for a renewed awareness of the existence and the proximity of the "Others"; it will have to ponder the problems of the Church with respect to the Others and as if under their surveillance. It will be the occasion for a stirring and a rapid maturation, universal and unanimous, of the Catholic conscience, in the full realization of the response required to the silent question of the Others among us and all around us. If the council pursues a more efficacious pastoral adaptation of the Church to the real needs of the times, "a prudent modernization" (John XXIII), the response would be a continuing expansion of the ecumenical movement which could foreseeably appear to the historian of the year 2000 or later—to men who are already born or who will be born in the course of these years—as one of the characteristic and most important traits of the Christian twentieth century, along with the final closing of the chapter on the "Middle Ages," the denunciation of paternalist and colonialist attitudes inherited from the nineteenth century, and, finally, the invasion of existence by the socialization of life and by technology.

4) Finally, it is not impossible that the council itself allow some element of dialogue. We may, without entering the domain of theology-fiction, conceive of a number of hypotheses and possibilities.

Let us start upon firm ground, following official statements. We have been told that the council itself will aim to tighten the bonds of the Catholic Church, to purify its life, to adapt its

discipline; it will not occupy itself with eventual reunification—which can hardly be envisioned with any but the Orthodox Churches. Only later may that question be approached.¹⁴ Even beyond the fact that the council represents an internal activity of the Catholic Church, it seems impossible, in effect, considering the very assumptions of the problem, that the council be the occasion for negotiations towards union. This was still possible at Ferrara-Florence in 1438. Today too many difficulties, enlarged and hardened, have made the situation more complicated, and the indispensable psychological and spiritual preparations are still too incomplete or too recent. They are certainly not without value, but several more years are needed, even supposing the most favorable conditions—which the devil, to be sure, will try to destroy—before these necessary preparations could be completed. The first Orthodox reactions to the announcement of the council were very critical, while the Protestant attitude remained one of "wait-and-see."

Let us, then, take as a hypothesis, or rather as a point of departure, the fact that the council will not itself be a council of union, but rather one of internal reform, preliminary to any offer of reconciliation. We note, moreover, that this perspective corresponds well enough to the sort of law of withdrawal-renewal followed by expansion which we have seen as a constant in the history of the Church. The fact remains that the very

¹⁴ See above, the declarations of His Holiness John XXIII, August 9, 1959, and of Cardinal Tisserant. Again, John XXIII, in the encyclical *Grata recordatio*, September 26, 1959: "[Pray] that the coming ecumenical council in which you will take part by contributing your counsel may be to the Church so marvelous an affirmation that the vigorous renewal of all of the Christian virtues which we expect of it will serve as invitation and encouragement for all those brothers and sons who are separated from the Apostolic See."

¹³ See C. Dumont, in *Towards Christian Unity*, January, 1959, pp. 3-4.

work of the Council will be directed, or rather eschatologically oriented, in the perspective of reconciliation and Christian reunification. Now one who desires an end desires the means to that end. The eschatological direction towards union, if it is not purely theoretical and imaginary, must develop certain exigencies in the preparation and during the course of the council.

Which exigencies? First of all, that the concentration of the Church on itself, its withdrawing into itself, result in a return to its purest traditions: biblical, liturgical, and patristic, with a rigorously executed voluntary purge of all that which while not necessary for the life of the Catholic Church, would surely constitute an insurmountable obstacle to the desired reconciliation: for example, certain mariological developments on which there is, in the heart of the Catholic Church, neither unanimity nor sufficiently mature development.¹⁵ Then, too, it will be necessary that the withdrawal-renewal be oriented in the direction of the dialogue to be initiated and therefore that it take account of the Others. An excellent judge of currents of contemporary thought told us not long ago that a Catholic today must constantly think and express himself as if he were "under the eyes of the non-believer."¹⁶ All those who will work for or at the council must pursue their labors as if they were under moral surveillance by the "Others." Then the council can be an occasion for drawing closer together.

How can we imagine that virtual pres-

ence of dialogue, with all its needs and its assumptions, developed to the maximum point, during the preparations for and in the course of the council?

One could envision that, on certain matters which the council will examine, we take into consideration some positions and experiences of the Others: whether reports be made by accurately informed Catholics or by means of direct interrogation. Let us take an example. It is known that the World Council of Churches conceives of the quest for unity in which it would like to play a part as fundamentally identical with the common quest for obedience to the Lord: this quest and obedience imply for Christians, in an activity of witness and evangelization, the full exercise of their responsibility towards the world. That is why the World Council of Churches envisions its fusion with the International Council of (Protestant) Missions. The "Ecumenicism" of the Council does not today consist so much in an inter-confessional dialogue as in a common effort to assume the Christian responsibility of evangelizing the world. Under these circumstances, not only do the "Young Churches" play a very active role in the Council, but the Council follows with strict attention the very difficult problems of the Christian missions resulting from the ultra-rapid transformation of the world, particularly in areas of evangelization of the highest priority: China, the Far East, India, the vast reaches of Africa, etc. Today these regions are experiencing simultaneously a rapid industrialization and a sharp development of nationalist movements, the expression of a consciousness of having attained to full human maturity and of having to dispense with all paternalism, all colonialism. It is clear that, in spite of the vastly different structures of the churches, these problems are fundamentally the same for the Catholic Church

¹⁵ The Council of Trent had scrupulously abstained from formulating points of doctrine on which there was no accord among Catholics. That was one reason for the fact, at first shocking, that it made no declaration on the authority of the Pope, a point, however, raised by the Reformation.

¹⁶ Title of a fine book by P. J. Levie, Brussels and Paris, 1944.

and for the Protestant communions which are members of the World Council. Will there not then be a tremendous interest in sharing—if not our efforts (alas, the end of the scandal of our division is not in sight)—at least our experiences? Besides, the very act of our taking into account their experiences and therefore their existence as Christians would be for our separated brethren a spiritually creative act, bringing into being a new situation: a climate of dialogue taking the place of a climate of opposition and rivalry, even if the two would have to coexist for a long time.

Let us go further. Could we not consider having at the council itself representatives—if not hierarchically, at least scientifically qualified—of the great non-Roman Christian communities, on hand in or near Rome for consultation, for the personal contacts which would be such an enriching experience, and also inversely that they may keep their friends well informed of the progress of our labors? Cardinal Tardini, the Secretary of State, has spoken of the possibility of non-Catholic observers. Furthermore, the Holy Father himself has made similar allusions.¹⁷ At the time the work was being done which was to be the foundation for Leo XIII's decision on Anglican Orders, two Anglican scholars took up temporary residence in Rome to be able eventually to document the findings of the Commission. Could we not consider

something along these lines, on a larger scale and in a still more positive atmosphere?

Moreover, the essential element is not the external form of the presence of outsiders, but the quality and authenticity of the presence. If the general atmosphere is not what it should be, the presence of outsiders, conversations and above all negotiations with them, cannot but worsen the situation. Nothing is more disastrous than an attempt at conciliation which fails. May one not describe the rupture of 1054 between Byzantium and Rome as the first abortive attempt at union? The essential element, in any case, is trust, because without it nothing is possible; with it, almost anything becomes possible. The prevailing climate today is not really one of trust, neither on one side nor the other. That is why we must be doubly cautious.

Trust implies a basic condition: that we treat the Others as persons, as subjects, not objects: not as objects of study, objects of sanctions, objects of repulsion, not even as objects of interest and solicitude. It is not simply a question of outward attitude, of manners: it is an attitude that must come from within, and therefore presupposes a change of heart and of spirit. It is clear that the fundamental condition for trust is also that for dialogue. Between the two there exists a strong kinship. To be conscious of the Others, to take them into account, is to treat them as persons; that is, at least virtually, and in the absence of dialogue with them later.

It would be a very great thing if, for the first time in history perhaps, the Catholic Church, on the occasion of a Council, entered into a structure of dialogue; without, of course, abandoning any of its basic principles, which can only be those of the Gospel. Such an abandonment would be a further means of destroying the dialogue, because one

¹⁷ Cardinal Tardini, in his press conference of October 31, 1959, declared: "The council is an internal affair of the Catholic Church, but it is probable that those who wish will be permitted to attend as observers; they will be well received, and it seems that if they are to follow the work they will need to be furnished with the most important preparatory documents." His Holiness John XXIII, audience of Aug. 30, 1959, had said that if some of the separated brethren came to the council they would be "reasonably" received. (*La Croix* of Nov. 1-2, 1959, and September 1, 1959.)

can enter into a dialogue only by being first of all oneself. The Church must continue to be itself. But instead of simply being *in the midst* of the Others, could it not include in its existence a consciousness of the existence of the Others, not merely as adversaries or competitors, as opponents to vanquish or rebels to subdue, but as men who pose a question and to whom we may address other questions at the same time we answer theirs? Is not the basic rule of ecumenical work, which one must accept if one is to do anything more than make speeches on the meaning of unity, this fact: *we are heretics to each other*, and yet we believe we can accomplish something together. We will continue until we have reached its conclusion, that is to say, as long as we are *two*. . . .

Will it be necessary to await the last evening of the world to reach that end,

as in the *Brief Report on the Anti-Christ*, V. Solovyov's far too improbable and fantastic drama?¹⁸ That is the realm of imagination. Reality will be more humble, entirely historical and human, and at the same time entirely divine: at once what we make it and what the grace of the Holy Spirit makes it. Has not our Holy Father compared the forthcoming Council to a new Pentecost?¹⁹

Emitte Spiritum tuum, et creabuntur.
Et renovabis faciem terrae!
Veni, Creator Spiritus!

Translated by ELIZABETH HUGHES

¹⁸ *Trois entretiens sur la guerre, la morale et la religion*, trans. E. Tavernier, Paris, 1916, pp. 171-217. In the presence of the Anti-Christ, the last Pope, Peter II, Friar John, and Prof. Ernst Pauli join dramatically in a common confession of Jesus Christ. . . .

¹⁹ Pentecost Homily, May 17, 1959, *Doc. cath.*, no. 1306, col. 769.

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REINHOLD NIEBUHR: THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHER OF CHRISTIAN REALISM

ROBERT C. GOOD

IT WAS FORTY YEARS AGO when Reinhold Niebuhr, a young radical and minister of a worker's congregation in booming Detroit, first began dissecting the pretensions and illusions of our times. Niebuhr's intellectual odyssey began in the era of our isolation, in the time of our idealism and social optimism, when men entertained "the vain illusions of budding omnipotence."¹ It continued, then, through the backwash and frustration of the twenties and thirties when our disillusionment was either so complete as to render us cynical to the rising threat of Fascism, or not complete enough, leaving us appalled at this unique danger but impotent and irrelevant before it. His development climaxed, but did not end, in the late thirties and during the years of World War Two. It was then that Niebuhr, as much as any other single voice, called us forth from the wilderness created by the doctrines of liberalism, pacifism, and economic determinism. His mature political philosophy provided us with the most penetrating critique of these intellectual heresies of the interwar years.

One suspects that his insight could not have been so keen had he not himself, during his own intellectual maturation,

experimented with many of the suppositions that later he inveighed so vigorously against. For it is true that in the early years, Niebuhr's mind tended to be a mirror held up to his times. His individual history was a reflection of an important segment of our collective history. In the early 1920's he was a liberal. "Democracy," he wrote, "... rests upon confidence in human beings, upon the faith that they are intelligent enough finally to discover the moral defects in social life and moral enough to desire their elimination once they have been apprehended."² In the late 1920's, disillusioned by "the truth about the war" and sobered by his experience in Detroit's industrial jungle, Niebuhr came to scorn the naiveté of the liberal's creed concerning man's beneficent nature and history's inevitable progress—but he remained a pacifist. Time and again, he "swore off" war, as if it were some personal, odious habit.³

¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, "Providence and Human Decisions," *Christianity and Crisis*, VII, (January 24, 1949), pp. 185-6.

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² Reinhold Niebuhr, "Christianity and Contemporary Politics," *Christian Century*, XLI (April 17, 1924), p. 499. Exactly 20 years later, he was to write: "The excessively optimistic estimates of human nature and of human history with which the democratic credo has been historically associated are a source of peril to democratic society; for contemporary experience is refuting this optimism and there is danger that it will seem to refute the democratic ideal as well." From Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (New York: Scribner's, 1944), p. x.

³ See, for example, Reinhold Niebuhr, *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic* (New York: Willet, Clark and Colby, 1929), p. 17 and Reinhold Niebuhr, "Why I am not a Christian," *Christian Century*, XLIV December 15, 1927, 1482-3. Some years later he wrote: "It is because men are sinners that justice can be achieved only by a certain degree of coercion

In the early 1930's he disentangled himself from pacifism⁴ only to become ensnared in the confusions surrounding Marxism. From Marx, he learned the meaning of political realism. But for several years, this realism teetered on the brink of what Niebuhr himself labelled a kind of cynicism. In his study, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, he was critical of the "moral cynicism" of Marxist thinkers who presumed without the slightest qualification that "all cultural, moral and religious forces are 'ideologies' which rationalize, but do not seemingly alter, the economic behaviour of various classes," thus reducing social relations to a crude "conflict of power with power."⁵ Yet so rigid was his own Marxism that Niebuhr lost all confidence in effecting progress through constitutional means;⁶ he presumed Fascism to be an advanced form of the decay of capitalism and the inescapable fate (barring a socialist revolution) of every Western nation;⁷ and thus he was unable, until 1935 when he was profoundly shaken by the Fascist attack on Ethiopia, to make any serious distinction between the "capitalist democracies" and the "Fascist dictatorships."⁸

on the one hand, and by resistance to coercion and tyranny on the other hand. . . . The refusal to recognize that sin introduces an element of conflict into the world invariably means that a morally perverse preference is given to tyranny over anarchy (war)." From Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christianity and Power Politics* (New York: Scribner's, 1940), pp. 14, 15.

⁴ He resigned from the pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation at the end of 1933, but did not completely renounce pacifism in international relations until Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in the fall of 1935.

⁵ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Scribner's, 1932), pp. 145-46.

⁶ See, for example, Reinhold Niebuhr, "After Capitalism—What?" *World Tomorrow*, XVI (March 1, 1933), pp. 203-5.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ See, for example, Reinhold Niebuhr, "Notes

In the light of this personal history, there is a certain autobiographical quality to Niebuhr's observation in the late thirties that "we are . . . living in a period in which either the optimism of yesterday has given way to despair, or in which some of the less sophisticated moderns try desperately to avoid the abyss of despair by holding to credos which all of the facts have disproved."⁹

It was Niebuhr's enormous accomplishment that he was able to move beyond liberalism and Marxism to a synthesis based upon a revived understanding of classical Christian faith. In the process he has taught us that we may be realistic while avoiding the "abyss of despair," and that there is a basis for hope far more substantial than the "credos which all of the facts have disproved."

The Basis of Christian Realism

THE PROGRESSIVE development of Reinhold Niebuhr's mature position, which using his own phrase we may call Christian realism, went hand in hand with his gradual emancipation from the dogmas that once had distorted his view of political reality—those of liberalism and Marxism. These dogmas gradually crumbled under the pressure of practical experience and in response to a dawning appreciation of the radical character of human freedom.

The development of Niebuhr's thought is, then, the unfolding story of the interaction between theory and empiricism, between abstraction and reality as time after time he was forced beyond his dogmas by personal experience and by the push of world events. An abridged list would include the following: The presumed harmony of nations and the

from a Berlin Diary," *Christian Century*, L (July 5, 1933), pp. 672-73.

⁹ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christianity and Power Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

fancied benevolence of human nature were discredited by World War One and belied by Detroit. Marxist assumptions concerning the derivation of social injustice and war were contradicted by the nature of the new Fascist tyrannies, while the invasion of Ethiopia revealed the foolishness of pacifist notions for dealing with an aggressive dictatorship. Still later, the responsible behavior of the Tory government in Britain and Roosevelt's administration in America disclosed the residual health in capitalist democracies, a possibility that Marxist dogma had denied.

Throughout the history of Niebuhr's development, one is struck by this steady movement away from dogma. The dogmas of the liberal view were censured by the dogmas of the Marxist view, which ultimately fell before the world view of the Christian faith and the judgments of experience. A chapter in his book, *The Irony of American History*, is entitled: "The Triumph of Experience Over Dogma." The American triumph described therein is also Niebuhr's; a better autobiographical title has seldom been coined.

Stated in different terms, Niebuhr increasingly has been impressed with the role of the contingent, the unpredictable, the unique in human history. "Everyone knows," he has written, "that history is drama. . . . Drama . . . must have at least two characteristics. The characters must act with a certain degree of consistency and not be arbitrarily manipulated. . . . But a drama must also present unpredictable events and reactions to situations. . . . Persons have a certain degree of freedom over all the pressures of events and causal chains in which they are determined."¹⁰

Indeed, understood from the dialectical

perspective of Biblical faith, man contains almost infinite possibilities for good or for evil just as history opens up almost infinite opportunities for the destruction and creation of human communities. This being the case, the assumptions and determinisms in all fixed positions will ultimately be exposed as too limited, ". . . which ought to persuade us the more to disavow pretensions of wisdom for any judgment of the moment."¹¹

At one point in his history-making Gifford lectures at Edinburgh University, Niebuhr observed, "Each great thinker makes the same mistake in turn, of imagining himself the final thinker. Descartes, Hegel, Kant, and Comte, to mention only a few moderns, were so certain of the finality of their thought that they have become fair sport for any wayfaring cynic."¹² Surely it would only open Niebuhr to the attacks of the next "wayfaring cynic" if one were to claim that he has circumvented this danger himself. Yet his profound appreciation for the uniqueness of each situation and the dialectical structure of his thought which serves to qualify even his most stringent judgments, prepares him, even as he arrives at a conclusion, to understand the historical precariousness of every conclusion. To know this, and yet to be able to decide and to act (no one can ever accuse Niebuhr of failing to make up his mind), is, one suspects, more than a moral accomplishment. It is a religious accomplishment, about which more must be said later.

Niebuhr's empiricism has led to a distrust of all "laws" or formulae in favor of a frankly pragmatic approach. In discussion, he once declared that an adequate theory of international politics

¹¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (New York: Scribner's, 1953), p. 14.

¹² Reinhold Niebuhr, *Human Nature* (New York: Scribner's, 1941), p. 195.

¹⁰ Reinhold Niebuhr, "Is History Predictable?" *Atlantic Monthly*, CXCIV (July 1954), pp. 69-70.

must take account of the fact that "in practical terms, there are no general laws. . . . In some cases, if one looks for general laws he will mess up the situation."¹³ On another occasion, Niebuhr wrote, "All sweeping generalizations and assumptions must be eschewed and the question must be constantly asked: what is the effect of this or that policy in this or that situation; how well does this particular constellation of power satisfy the requirements of justice and of freedom?"¹⁴

This is not to suggest that Niebuhr advocates a "presuppositionless" approach, nor that pragmatism means the rejection of norms. Nothing could be farther from his position. The presuppositions upon which Niebuhr stands when describing political reality are derivations of the Christian faith and its understanding of the nature and destiny of man, assumptions that he finds constantly verified by experience. The Christian's insistence on the universality of man's tendency to egocentricity, he has said, ". . . would seem to be attested by practical experience about as irrefutably as any truth can be established. It is empirically respected by all men of affairs who are charged with any responsibility in business or government."¹⁵ In the most profound sense, Niebuhr's development may be described as the gradual displacement of all alternatives to Christian faith.

Similarly, Niebuhr's pragmatism is not isolated from norms. "Pragmatism as such has no particular virtue," he has written. "There must be a proper framework of values in which pragmatic de-

cisions are reached."¹⁶ Values such as order and justice, freedom and equality, Niebuhr understands as concomitants of the Christian interpretation of the human situation, and also as a part of the political tradition of the West. Niebuhr, who first and foremost is a moral philosopher, has spent a lifetime seeking to define the proper relationship between normative values and political reality, between self-interest and disinterested love, between human sin and Divine Grace. He has discovered that every ethical position that ignores the relevance of any of these factors will result in irresponsibility.

Thus Niebuhr's contribution to the theory of politics has been threefold.¹⁷ He provides a theory of *political reality*—an interpretation of man's nature, both as individual and member of a collective, particularly the nation. He offers a theory of *political norms*—a definition of value-goals relevant to the political organization of society. Finally, he proposes a *political ethic*—a view of behavior appropriate to political reality and to moral ideals.

The Political Philosophy of Christian Realism

1. Political Reality

"MAN HAS ALWAYS been his own most vexing problem. How shall he think of himself?" Thus begins the first volume of the Gifford lectures, Niebuhr's most mature statement of his theology.¹⁸ This is indeed the beginning.

¹³ "Rockefeller Foundation, Conference on International Politics," May 7, 8, 1954, mimeographed, pp. 2-3.

¹⁴ Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Anomaly of European Socialism," *The Yale Review*, XIII (December 1952), pp. 166-67.

¹⁵ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christian Realism and Political Problems*, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

¹⁶ Reinhold Niebuhr, "Halfway to What?" *Nation*, CLXX (June 14, 1950), p. 28.

¹⁷ It is misleading to compartmentalize Niebuhr's thought. His views on human nature, moral ideals and responsible behaviour are all part of a single whole. Though it risks fracturing this unity, the following schema is used for the sake of clarity.

¹⁸ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Human Nature*, op. cit., p. 1.

To understand political phenomena, Niebuhr says, one must first understand human nature.

Man lives in two dimensions of being. He is "... a child of nature, subject to its vicissitudes, compelled by its necessities, driven by its impulses. ..." He is also "... a spirit who stands outside nature, life, himself, his reason and the world," and who knows the validity of the law of love for his life.¹⁹ In a word, man is amphibious. He lives under the dominion of natural impulse and at the same time may rise above it; he is both finite and free.

This creates problems. Man, unlike other creatures, *knows* he is dependent, finite, a creature. This knowledge produces insecurity and anxiety. A perfect faith in the security of God's love would overcome anxiety. A perfect response to God's love would mean to love one's neighbor as a child of God, thus healing every cleavage in human existence.

But such a faith is possible only if man fully accepts his finiteness and his dependence upon God and neighbor. Rather than accepting his real self and his real situation, and rather than using his freedom to build the community of love with his fellows, man is tempted to seek a unilateral security through the assertion of his ego. Man's freedom, then, is ambiguous. His capacity as a free spirit to stand outside himself and view himself as object (which is the ground of conscience) easily results in viewing himself as end (which is the ground of sin). Indeed, the centralization of the ego is the essence of sin. It is "... the persistent tendency to regard ourselves as more important than anyone else and to view a common problem from the standpoint of our own interests."²⁰

It should be noted that this is neither a fatalistic nor a negative view of man. It is the Biblical view, a view which Niebuhr calls "problematic." Man is not sinful by definition, but by disposition. Sin does not inhere in him, nor in his problematic relationship to freedom and necessity. Indeed, man's freedom to transcend himself and his own interests accounts for his creativity and dignity. He reaches beyond "every social, natural, communal, and rational cohesion." He aspires after the ideal of perfection. He can envisage the interests of others, and his conscience is troubled when he takes advantage of others. He is capable of defining what is good in terms of general principles, and of organizing the instruments of justice to prevent one man from taking advantage of another.

But man's freedom may be misused. When it is, it is the source of his misery. Rebelling against his "creatureliness," he asserts himself at the expense of his neighbor. The same capacity for reflection that permits the definition of justice also allows man to invent justifications for pursuing his own interest. "He wants unity, he wants harmony, but he wants to be at the center of it."²¹

Man's nature is not simple; it is complex. Sin is a universal characteristic of his behaviour, but man knows himself to be a sinner, and so evidences a "memory" of former righteousness. He lives in tension between the demands of love, and his failure to fulfill these demands. He has a capacity for justice (which makes democracy possible) and an inclination to injustice (which makes democracy necessary). "Through all the ages man has been a lion who devours the lamb; but he has been a curious kind

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁰ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Human Destiny* (New York: Scribner's, 1945), p. 259.

²¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Role of Prophetic Religion in the World Crisis," *Men of Tomorrow* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), p. 113.

of lion who dreams of the day when the lion and the lamb will lie down together."²² This double view of man's nature is the foundation of Niebuhr's approach. Every dialectical relationship he establishes derives from this understanding—the dialectic between order and justice with their corresponding corruptions, tyranny and anarchy; and the dialectic between realism and idealism, with their related extremes, cynicism and sentimentalism.

Man, then, not only is subject to natural limits, but he knows it. He is anxious and insecure. He is aware that life is arbitrary and capricious and that others may challenge his right to existence. Anticipating the peril in which he stands, he transmutes his natural instinct for survival, his will-to-live, into the will-to-power. He seeks to establish security by subduing or controlling those about him. But man is more than a natural creature. He is interested in more than physical survival. He is "darkly conscious" of his insignificance and seeks to establish his importance through the achievement of influence and social approval and by "pretensions of pride." Thus, "the conflicts between men . . . are never simply conflicts in which each man or group seeks to guard its power and prestige against the peril of competing expressions of power and pride."²³

However, the possession of power inevitably involves an encroachment upon the security of others who are aroused to assert their own power, thus further compounding insecurity and fear and so strengthening the will to overcome weakness by accumulating greater power. "There is no level of greatness and power," Niebuhr writes, "in which the

lash of fear is not at least one strand in the whip of ambition."²⁴

Reason and religion can and do intervene to mitigate this struggle. Reason permits a self-transcendent perspective from which the individual may view his life in relation to others; and religion demands that this other life be affirmed. Indeed, men may approximate the law of love in their relations with others. But reason and religion are easily recruited by interest in its own defense; when this is the case, they only add to the fury of the struggle.

The will-to-power usually does not become politically relevant until it is expressed by individuals acting collectively. The human group compounds selfishness, and none more so than the most powerful of human communities, the nation. The nation accumulates the existing selfish impulses of individuals, allowing them, through its collective instruments, to express vicariously their pride and their desire for "power and glory." Moreover it solicits the unselfishness of individuals, but enlists this unselfishness in support of its own parochial ends. National loyalties always express themselves in part through a justified concern for the welfare of one's own group, and in part through an unjustified neglect or contempt for the welfare of others. Further, national loyalty is more the product of emotion (a compound including both fear and reverence) than of reason, which makes self-criticism on the part of the nation virtually impossible. These are among the reasons why Niebuhr never tires of saying that in international politics one must take the selfishness of the nation for granted, and that relations among nations generally are characterized by a contest of power which the temporizing influences of reason and morality may

²² Reinhold Niebuhr, "Christianity and Communism: Social Justice," *Spectator*, CLVII (November 6, 1936), pp. 802-803.

²³ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, op. cit., p. 20.

²⁴ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Human Nature*, op. cit., p. 194.

mitigate but never completely overcome.

Each nation, thus, becomes a device for achieving social cohesion and for establishing the instruments of government designed to maintain order. But, ironically, the same device that makes for cohesion and order in national society creates division and disorder in international society. "The special loyalty which men give their limited community is natural enough," Niebuhr has observed, "but it is also the root of international anarchy."²⁵ There is no power of government in international society capable of arbitrating the conflicts among nations from a reasonably impartial perspective. Whatever order is achieved arises from the imposition of preponderant power by one or more of the interested participants. The power thus imposed tends always to be vexatious, prompting both resentment and rebellion on the part of those subjugated. This perennial difficulty has been deepened by the rapid growth of techniques which have transformed every international problem into global proportions and now threaten to expand every international conflict into an atomic armageddon.

2. Political Norms

THE VALUE-GOALS of society can be stated only in the broadest terms, for "the freedom of man and the consequent variety of historic and dramatic patterns and configurations which he is able to elaborate, make it necessary to have a flexible definition of the good."²⁶ These norms, after the phrase of Santayana, involve maintaining the harmony of the whole (order), while preserving the vitality of the parts (justice). This

definition precludes tyrannically imposed order, for such an order would destroy the freedom to assert the unique vitality of each part. Yet, the expression of this freedom must not be permitted to destroy the harmony of the whole, nor to annul the quest for equal justice. Ideally, it is the function of government to hold these several requirements—order and justice, freedom and equality—in approximate balance.

Still, the first requirement of any society must be the establishment of order. "This value comes first because it is the very principle of existence. Chaos means non-existence."²⁷ Lasting order has never been achieved in human society "... without setting force, as the instrument of order, against force as the instrument of anarchy."²⁸ This means that "we must give some one, some class, some government, some nation, or some group of nations, more authority than others."²⁹

While order (which is requisite to the harmony of the whole) is the first requirement of society, everything possible must be done to prevent the preservation of order from destroying justice (which is requisite to the vitality of the parts). Justice is the law of love made applicable to a society of sinful men. Love creates "... the obligation of affirming the life and interests of the neighbor as much as those of the self."³⁰ Thus, the idea of equality is a derivative of the law of love as it is applied to relations among men in society. Niebuhr frequently has defined justice in

²⁷ "The Moral Question in International Relations," an unpublished paper for the Rockefeller Foundation.

²⁸ Reinhold Niebuhr, "Force and Reason in Politics," *Nation*, CL (February 10, 1940), p. 216.

²⁹ Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Long and the Short Range of History," *Christianity and Society*, VII (Winter, 1941), p. 8.

³⁰ Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, op. cit., p. 110.

²⁵ Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York: Harper, 1935), p. 115.

²⁶ Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Moral Issue in International Relations," an unpublished paper for the Rockefeller Foundation.

the classic phrase, "giving each man his due." All else being equal, each man's due must be approximately the same as that of every other.

The ideal of freedom is also a regulative principle in the creation of a just order. A community that stifles the free expression of its members forfeits the possibility of creativity and becomes insufferable to those whose interests and vitalities are unduly suppressed. In the principles of equality and freedom, then, one discovers an echo of the law of love.

However, the pursuit of justice in a society of sinful men also involves the contradiction of love. In the Kingdom of perfect love, equality, freedom and harmony are perfectly compatible with one another, for love, by its very nature, is the "uncoerced giving of the self" in affirmation and support of the welfare of the other. But under conditions of human sin, freedom quickly becomes license unless it is restrained; equality remains an abstraction unless it is enforced; and the harmony of the whole is in jeopardy unless those who wield power limit the liberty and the rights of each in the interest of justice and order for all.

It is apparent too that the requirements of order are always in potential opposition to the principles of justice. Order depends on concentrated power to enforce obedience. Justice depends on a balance of power to preserve rights. In each, there is implicit the denial of the other. Unchecked, the pursuit of order becomes tyranny. Unrestrained, the pursuit of justice becomes anarchy. These extremes are "... the Scylla and Charybdis between which the frail bark of social [order and] justice must sail. It is almost certain to founder upon one rock if it makes the mistake of regarding the other as the only peril."³¹

³¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Human Destiny*, op. cit., p. 258.

To summarize: "Political community must be brought into being by considering first how the creation of a power and authority at its center may check the tendency toward disintegration. The second consideration is how a proper equilibrium among the various units may check the tendency toward domination from the center. This is the correct approach toward the difficult problem of government in general."³² Thus, order must take immediate priority over justice. But the problem of justice is more important in the long run, for unless order can be made to implicate justice, it will prove too vexatious to last.

The problem of reconciling the requirements of order and justice appears at every level of politics, including the international level. Liberty and equality are held to be the criteria of justice by nations and peoples who protest their subordination to other nations and peoples. But, as in all realms of political life, it is difficult to determine exactly how much liberty and equality ought to be abridged in the interest of maintaining the order of international society, or how much these standards ought to be championed in the interest of making order consonant with justice.

That is to say, there *are* fixed norms in political life; but there are *no* fixed principles for relating these norms to each other in specific situations. Historical contingencies must determine the proper relationship of the several norms. Thus, for example, one must judge each situation in its own historical context to determine the degree to which the security of the international community may justifiably be jeopardized when pressing for the rights of a subjugated nation; or the extent to which the equal rights of individual nations may justifi-

³² Reinhold Niebuhr, "The United Nations and World Organization," *Christianity and Crisis*, II (January 25, 1945), p. 2.

ably be sacrificed to achieve the further integration of some alliance of nations.

But if the norms in their relationship to each other may not be fixed, they are still norms. Thus, "it is possible . . . to affirm that the absolute want of any of these moral values is an evil. A situation without order means chaos and is therefore bad. An order without justice means that it will become intolerable in the long run, though a community may suffer injustice in the short run in preference to chaos. [A community] without liberty or equality must be sacrificed for the integration of the community."³³

In international society, order is made compatible with the requirements of justice only with the greatest of difficulty. The immediate priority given to order in every community is doubly important in international society because relations among legally sovereign states constantly border on anarchy and the dangers of anarchy in the nuclear age are unprecedented. The achievement of minimal justice requires that restraints be imposed on the powerful nations. A balance of power among competing units serves to provide such restraints. However, a balance of power, unless exercised under the equilibrating force of government, is a managed anarchy in which anarchy always threatens to overcome management as each of the several participants in the balance seeks to improve its own power position *vis-a-vis* the rest. It is to be expected and preferred that a powerful state or coalition of states will achieve sufficient power to serve as an organizing center for the balance, or indeed to become the source of "imperial" authority for ordering the relations of a system of states. To gain legitimacy and to sustain its viability, such authority must combine a minimum of coercion with a maximum of

prestige. It must gain compliance more by consent than by means of enforced obedience. It must demonstrate a capacity for justice, or at least cultivate a reputation for justice.

To this end, there must be inner, moral restraints imposed on those who wield power. A sense of political prudence is necessary if one is to calculate accurately the effects of power on others. A sense of justice is equally necessary. It must derive from a standard beyond national self-interest. It must provide the motives and the norms for the constant pursuit of a concurrence between the particular interests of the nation and more general values. This sense of justice can be mediated to the nation only through morally and religiously sensitized individuals and groups, whose loyalty to the nation is tempered by membership in a community of loyalty transcending the nation.

However, the political realist must acknowledge that, no matter how enlightened authority may be, every concentration of power will eventually raise up forces antithetical to justice. The pressure of countervailing power against the centers of preponderant power is prerequisite to the renewal of justice, until of course the order-creating power of the newly ascendant elite, nation, or coalition itself threatens justice. This alternation between the requirements of order and justice is a permanent feature of political life.

3. Political Ethics

THE TASK of a responsive political ethic is to relate human recalcitrance to moral ideals, self-love to love, without minimizing the force of either. The difficulty with all fixed ethical positions is that they stress one dimension at the expense of the other. Niebuhr's critique may be set forth as follows: The

³³ Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Moral Question in International Relations," *op. cit.*

realist identifies self-love as a universal characteristic in human behavior. The cynic not only takes self-love into account but wrongly makes it normative. The idealist identifies love, not self-love, as the law of man's existence ("in the sense that man can only be healthy and his communities at peace if man is drawn out of himself and saved from the self-defeating consequences of self-love").³⁴ The *sentimentalist* not only takes love into account but mistakenly believes it to be a universal characteristic of man's behaviour.

Clearly, the Biblical understanding of man demands a synthesis of realism and idealism so that the truth in each view may save the other from its characteristic perversion. The realist knows that self-love expressed as political power cannot easily be transformed by love. Political justice must be willing to use countervailing power to balance, deflect and beguile the power of self-interest. At the same time, the idealist knows that love must serve to clarify the objectives for which power is used, and to reveal that the self-interest to be deflected is in one's self as well as in the opponent. What is needed is "... a viable Christian social and political ethic, free of illusions about human nature, but also with a strong sense of responsibility for establishing a maximum of freedom and justice within the limits set by human sinfulness."³⁵

The dangers to an ethic that must take adequate account of both sin and love are enormous. The perfectionist becomes impotent, for it is not easy to act when every available course of action requires compromise. The idealist becomes fanatical, for it is difficult to see

that one's own behavior also may betray the ideal. The realist becomes cynical, for it is hard to engage in the careful calculations by which interest is balanced against interest without assuming that man can look no farther than interest.

Niebuhr seeks to overcome these dangers by establishing a dialogue between pragmatism and a source of ultimate judgment. On the one hand, absolute values can shape only ultimate ends (the just community) and motives (goodwill). On the other hand, the choice of means by which these values are to be fulfilled is a pragmatic concern, based on technical and political considerations, and is only confused by the interjection of ethical absolutes such as non-violence. But every pragmatic act must remain under the scrutiny of the absolute law of love, which, though it can never fully be realized in human life, still remains relevant as a continuing source of the norms of justice and as the ultimate perspective from which the limits of justice are discovered.

An equally important dialectic must be applied to the analysis of political morality in international relations. The idealist is wrong if he assumes that the statesman must support some universal value, though it sacrifice the nation's interest. The realist is just as wrong if he supposes that the only meaningful standard for statesmen is that given by the nation's interests.

In political morality, there can be no absolute sacrifice of particular interests for the sake of the whole, partly because these particular interests are rooted in a collective expression of selfishness that the statesman may be able to restrain or deflect but not ignore or overcome, and partly because the welfare and security of the national group represent values that the statesman, in his responsibility, must defend. On the other hand,

³⁴ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christian Realism and Political Problems*, op. cit., p. 130.

³⁵ Reinhold Niebuhr, "Our Dependence Is on God," *Christian Century*, LXXI (September 1, 1954), p. 1036 (emphasis added).

the responsible statesman must be sensitive to the fact that the interests of his nation may and frequently do contravene the requirements of an ordered and just international society.

The hallmark of political morality is neither the sacrifice of parochial interest nor the elevation of parochial interest to a norm for political behavior. Rather, responsible statesmanship must seek a concurrence between national interest and the general welfare of international society. This concurrence can be approximated only if interest is brought under the scrutiny of a sense of justice that transcends all expressions of interest; and only when the residual interest that still remains is acknowledged.

Realism and Christian Faith

THE INTRICACY of Niebuhr's position escapes precise definition. It cannot be neatly labelled. If we call him a Christian realist we do so because he himself has frequently used the term and because he has chosen to stress realism as a corrective to the optimistic cast of contemporary thought. The phrase is more apt than most for it implies a dialogue between moral ideals and human recalcitrance—as each is interpreted by Christian faith. This suggests that Niebuhr's philosophical front line, from which he mounts his attack on the problems of the day, is mobile rather than fixed.

Nothing could be more accurate. To presume to reduce Niebuhr's political philosophy to a set of immutable laws would be unNiebuhrian indeed. He has frequently cautioned us of the dangers of a closed science of politics or a legalistic system of ethics. It is often objected that Niebuhr provides an incomplete view of political norms and an inadequate political ethic. His axioms are too

broad and too dialectical to offer much help in finding one's way in the labyrinth of conflicting goals and tragic choices in politics. There is force in this criticism. Niebuhr offers us no road map. But, by facing us constantly with the power of collective egotism and the mandate to do justice, he identifies the wrong turns and the blind alleys and points us in roughly the right direction. A systematic political philosopher would attempt more. But Niebuhr is the prophet who warns and inveighs, not the scholastic who weighs and refines. More than warning and inveighing are needed, as Niebuhr knows better than most. Hard decisions must constantly be made on specific issues. But the circumstances of political choice are so infinitely varied that the laws attempting to bridge the gap between Niebuhr's middle axiom and the "real situation" run the risk of creating great mischief.

"Niebuhrism," if it exists at all, is not so much a system of thought as a caste of mind. It is a complex of perspectives that, for Niebuhr, have been biblically derived and validated by experience—perspectives about human nobility and sin; human anxiety and the quest for security through power; the ambiguous role of reason, morality and religion, the nemesis of pride and power; and the persistent, disturbing intervention of a Divine "oughtness" in human undertakings.

These perspectives issue in a commitment concerning the nature of man and his destiny, the nature of God and the meaning of history; and Niebuhr's political philosophy and political ethic are a dynamic continuing response to that commitment. To freeze these understandings into a rigid, completely coherent system would do violence to their spirit. For at the center is not system at all, but the concerned, searching, believing, understanding and acting person.

One is tempted to say that Niebuhr is not really interested in systematic philosophy or in formal ethics. He is interested in responsible men. No amount of rational knowledge nor meticulous obedience to moral standards can substitute for the self's repeated encounters with historical reality, filled with the inertia of past wrong and the possibility of future good; nor for the self's repeated encounters with itself, its recalcitrance and pride; nor for the self's repeated encounters with God, when all pretensions of pride are shattered and the self is freed again to work for the loving relationship and the just community.³⁰

This is only to say that Niebuhr, though a political philosopher, is first a Christian thinker. He ought to be understood as such. The very well-springs of his thought on politics draws on his interpretation of the Christian faith at every point.

Thus, the Christian faith provides an understanding of the deepest meaning of our most serious political crisis, that of contemporary international society. Ours is the "age between the ages," Niebuhr has said. This is politically true in the sense that absolute national sovereignty has become an anachronism, while organization of political power at the world level cannot yet be achieved. This is the "age between the ages" in the moral sense too. Men can see clearly what needs to be done in order to bring peace and stability into the lives of men and nations. Yet there is a law in their minds. The great nations may sincerely want to preserve peace and promote justice. But each seeks a peace and a justice advantageous to its own interests; each desires to preserve or enhance its own power and influence; each suspects

the intentions of the other. The pride of the powerful makes it difficult to accommodate conflicting interests. And the anxiety of the powerful tempts them to make themselves independently secure frequently even against their own partners in a common enterprise.

The crisis of international society is a collective and vivid expression of the general human situation. Love is the universal law of life, the precondition of mutuality and human community; but self-love is a universal characteristic of life and an annulment of community. The ultimate crisis of international society lies within man himself. This fact has a peculiar pathos for a generation that thought peace and security would automatically result from victory over a certain group of nations. We now ought to know, Niebuhr observes, that the roots of discord are never only in our opponent but in ourselves as well.

The Christian faith points to a source of judgment leading to repentance. It provides a vantage point from which it is revealed that even the most righteous men are not justified before the righteousness of God, and that even the most righteous cause is tainted with self-righteousness, thus complicating its contest with evil. This conviction is particularly relevant to Americans, who confront an obviously idolatrous and tyrannical foe, and who therefore are constantly tempted to a "mood of national self-congratulation."

A powerful and self-righteous nation tends to confuse its own majesty with that of God, and so, either by its moral complacency or its heedless use of power, becomes a hazard to its less powerful allies, and a threat to the stability of the world. The Christian faith points to a God before whom "the nations are as a drop in the bucket," and "who bringeth princes to naught." In this confrontation, the inevitable contradiction be-

³⁰ I have taken some of these sentences from the Editors' Introduction, *Reinhold Niebuhr on Politics*, edited by Harry R. Davis and Robert C. Good, (New York: Scribner's, 1960).

tween Divine and human purpose is clarified, and self-righteousness is transformed into modesty, contrition and humility. This makes possible the recognition of the common defect of the human will that accounts for both the enemy's demonry and one's own vanity. "Strangely enough," writes Niebuhr, "none of the insights derived from this faith are finally contradictory to our purpose and duty of preserving our civilization. They are, in fact, prerequisites for saving it. For if we should perish, the ruthlessness of the foe would be only the secondary cause of disaster. The primary cause would be that the strength of a giant nation was directed by eyes too blind to see all the hazards of the struggle; and the blindness would be induced not by some accident of nature or history but by hatred and vainglory."³⁷

The Christian faith releases the sensitive man into responsible action. From the Christian viewpoint, an ethic appropriate to both the reality of sin and the law of love is not a moral achievement at all, but a religious one. If the force of sin is taken seriously, it will be seen that it is not possible in political life to be both responsible and morally "pure." Does the moral man contend that he would rather die than purchase his survival by a defense based on nuclear capability that carries inevitably the risk of nuclear war? But the responsible man may feel himself obliged to work for the survival of a civilization which a one-sided disavowal of atomic weapons would place in terrible jeopardy.³⁸ There is no "pure" position here. Does

the moral man presume that there must be no intercourse, no accommodation, with malevolent tyrants? But the responsible man may understand that the price of remaining untainted by contact with tyranny is likely to be armed conflict with tyranny.³⁹ Again there is no morally "pure" position available.

In short, we cannot be responsible without guilt. For all responsibility is exercised in a field where some values can be achieved only at the expense of others, where partial and fragmentary values must be defended against contending forces, and where the ultimate exercise of responsibility may involve the evil of threatening, or actually taking, other life. Neither is purity to be found by withdrawing from these tragic choices. There is no moral hiding place. For withdrawal means disavowing all responsibility for the creation of the limited order and the pursuit of the relative justice which are possible of attainment by imperfect men.

There is no escape from guilt. To assume otherwise is to sow the seeds of self-righteousness and fanaticism, and to destroy the very possibility of forgiveness, which is "... the demand that the evil in the other shall be borne without vindictiveness because the evil in the self is known."⁴⁰ The knowledge of guilt, however, will immobilize the sensitive man who does not come to this knowledge through a profound faith. The Christian faith makes known that we can accept ourselves, our situation and our responsibilities because, in spite of our guilt, we have been accepted by God. Niebuhr's ethic rests squarely upon the doctrine of justification by faith.⁴¹

³⁷ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (New York: Scribner's, 1952), p. 174.

³⁸ See Reinhold Niebuhr, "Dilemma in a Nuclear Age," *Messenger*, XXII (July 2, 1957), p. 5; Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Hydrogen Bomb," *Christianity and Society*, XV (Spring, 1950), p. 6; and Reinhold Niebuhr, "Pauline Doctrine," *Messenger*, XXII (April 9, 1957), p. 5.

³⁹ See Reinhold Niebuhr, "Co-Existence or Total War?" *Christian Century*, LXXI (August 18, 1954), pp. 971-73.

⁴⁰ Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, op. cit., p. 223.

⁴¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Human Destiny*, op. cit., p. 188.

If in faith we can acknowledge God's saving act toward man, then we are freed to confess our involvement in the sins of the world without despair, and to recognize our responsibility to seek the extension of justice without vainglory. Then with Paul we may say that though frequently perplexed, we are never perplexed unto hopelessness. And then with Lincoln we may seek to do the right as it is given us to know the right, neither puffed up in the conviction of our momentary righteousness, nor impotent in the deeper conviction of our perennial unrighteousness.

Finally, the Christian faith offers a hope that does not depend upon the historical success of the human enterprise. The nature of the attainable peace and justice of society always will remain somewhat tentative, "... an armistice between opposing factions. There is no perfect harmony in human history, no peace within the limits of understanding."⁴²

Mankind must be prepared to live for centuries with heartbreaking frustrations, eased somewhat by small advances toward the desired goal of a genuine world community. For Christian realism makes clear that even the highest of human achievements is infected with self-interest, and that human sin is compounded in an age when the actions of powerful nations have world-wide consequences. The Christian faith, however, understands that history is God's, not man's. This gives promise that the human enterprise, which cannot be fulfilled within history, will be redeemed

and completed beyond history. Such a faith, says Niebuhr, preserves men from the alternate moods of sentimentality and despair, trusting human powers too much in one moment and then, in the next, losing all hope in the meaning of life when men discover the limits of human possibility.⁴³

But the Christian faith also teaches that, while men are not the masters of history, they are yet the agents of God in history; and that, while history is not redemptive, it is nonetheless creative. There is significance in every historic achievement no matter how fragmentary. There is meaning in the struggle to achieve a community in which each loves his neighbor even as himself. Men are not impotent. Again this meaning is fully apparent only to those who act in the faith that God ultimately will redeem the failure to bring forth the perfect community. So men are saved from hysterical attempts to achieve what cannot be achieved.

In the most profound sense, all human striving takes place in the "age between the ages." The ideal is always coming to birth, but there is not strength to bring forth. Men see what ought to be done to achieve peace and justice, but do not have the strength consistently to do what they ought. Thus, from the perspective of the Christian faith, concludes Niebuhr, "we will not be surprised by any evil which appears in history; and in our surprise, we will not seek escape into either complacency or hysteria."⁴⁴

⁴³ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, op. cit., p. 189.

⁴⁴ Reinhold Niebuhr, "Christ the Hope of the World," *Religion in Life*, XXIII (Summer, 1954), p. 339.

⁴² Reinhold Niebuhr, *Discerning the Signs of the Times* (New York: Scribner's, 1946), p. 187.

TRUE AND FALSE IN METAPHYSICS

W. H. WALSH

I

"THE Elimination of Metaphysics," as it was called in the first chapter of Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic*, has been a continuing theme in modern thought. Already in the eighteenth century, in the writings of Voltaire for example, the term "metaphysics" was a term of abuse: to call a man a metaphysician was something like calling him a charlatan. Metaphysicians, the suggestion was, stood to genuine enquirers (natural philosophers) in the same relation as witch-doctors stand to qualified practitioners: at best they might produce useful results by inspired guesswork, though the common effect of their labors was only to increase superstition and obscurantism. Kant's early description of metaphysics¹ as "this fictitious science with its accursed fertility" may be taken as representative of the advanced thought of the age, even if it does not fully correspond to his considered view in the *Cri-*

¹ Letter to Mendelssohn, April 8, 1766, quoted by Popper, *The Open Society*, II, 237.

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tique of Pure Reason. Hume, of course, had expressed the same sentiment some years earlier in his famous passage about volumes of "divinity and school metaphysics" which are to be "consigned to the flames, as containing nothing but sophistry and illusion."

The analytic movement in twentieth-century philosophy has in effect been conspicuously anti-metaphysical, though the elimination of metaphysics did not figure explicitly in the original analytic programme. Russell in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, for example, objected to Bradley not because he was a metaphysician, but rather because he sought to do philosophy in the grand manner: sought, that is to say, to solve all philosophical problems at once, and to solve them by the armchair methods introduced by Parmenides and Plato. This, he said, could at best result in "large untested generalities recommended only by a certain appeal to the imagination." Against this Russell promised that the introduction of his own analytic method would produce "piecemeal, detailed and verifiable results," modestly comparing his work to that of Galileo in physics.² Seen at a distance of forty years, the philosophy of logical atomism has a more speculative air than its founder suggested; Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, which gave definitive expression to it, has itself been described recently as a metaphysical treatise. But though this description is in a certain sense just, it is not one which would have occurred to early admirers of the work, who saw in it a crushing exposure of metaphysical pretensions, a modern restatement of the anti-metaphysical position of Hume. The line of develop-

² *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

ment which led from Russell and the early Wittgenstein to Carnap and Ayer was thus entirely natural: it was (or seemed at the time) only a short step from saying that the generalities propounded by the major philosophers of the past are untested to saying that they are untestable, or again from describing their work as having an appeal only to the imagination to maintaining that they contrived to say nothing of real significance. And while it is true that many propositions which seemed obvious to *avant-garde* thinkers in the thirties have been subjected to severe criticism by subsequent philosophers, the proposition that metaphysicians, generally speaking, talk nonsense continues to enjoy wide acceptance. There is some recognition of the subtlety and insight displayed by certain major metaphysical writers in analyzing and connecting concepts, but little or no tendency to take the constructive side of their work seriously.

What I shall call the official view of metaphysics, the view which is still, I think, most widely accepted among English-speaking philosophers, has two main points to it. First, that metaphysicians seek to give us information about the reality which, they say, underlies appearances, or about what they hold to be the "true" nature of things. This amounts, as Kant saw long ago, to a project to penetrate beyond what can be known by empirical methods to its alleged supersensible substrate, and so is a promise to bring us news from nowhere. Secondly, that metaphysicians get themselves into the position of thinking that their project is feasible, and even that they have succeeded in carrying it out, by making a series of logical mistakes. Examples of such mistakes are perhaps not so freely offered by supporters of the official account as we should expect, but the idea can be illustrated from the celebrated instance of Heideg-

ger, first put forward by Carnap and somewhat oddly repeated by Ayer, who made play with the concept of "The Nothing," and is said to have got away with it only because the logical grammar of the word "nothing" is in certain respects like that of a proper name. Moore's case of the confusion inherent in the Ontological Argument, as a result of which a statement like "Tigers exist" is interpreted as precisely parallel to "Tigers are fierce," would be another, altogether more plausible, example.

Now I have no wish to deny that metaphysicians, like the rest of us, are liable to make logical mistakes, nor do I want to play down the importance of these mistakes when they occur. Admittedly, metaphysicians have on occasion resorted to logical equivocation to eke out otherwise unconvincing arguments, and so far as they have done so, whether consciously or not, their work must stand condemned. But it is one thing to say this and another to believe that logical equivocation is all there is to metaphysics. I find it very implausible to suppose that any such thesis could be true when I think of the analytic powers and sensitivity to logical distinctions displayed by so many of the great metaphysical writers; by Aristotle, for example, or by Leibniz. Similarly with the view that the object of metaphysics is to bring up news from nowhere, to put us in touch with the Beyond. There have indeed been many metaphysicians, from Plato onwards, who have spoken as if this were precisely their object, as witness their talk of Forms, Monads or the Absolute, to say nothing of God and the immortal soul. But here again appearances, especially first appearances, may be misleading. It may well be that this reading of the metaphysical enterprise, on which it would indeed stand condemned, is not compulsory; that Kant's celebrated description of meta-

physics as the supposed science of things supersensible is radically mistaken.

One powerful reason for thinking that there might be more to metaphysics than bad logic and a futile striving after the unknowable is to be found in the effect which unprejudiced reading of metaphysical treatises continues to produce. Despite all that has been said about the empty character of metaphysical concepts and the unverifiability of metaphysical assertions, the fact remains that works like Spinoza's *Ethics*, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* and even the *Monadology* of Leibniz have what I can only call a power to speak to us. One cannot go through the process of studying such writings and remain totally unaltered by the experience. And the alteration that occurs is not that one is, *per impossible*, put in touch with things supersensible, as if by some sort of intellectual spiritualism; it is rather that, after appreciating the author's point of view and grasping his system of ideas, one as it were sees familiar things with fresh eyes. Whatever the explanation, we have to admit that people find metaphysical works illuminating and revealing. To claim that they reveal what lies beyond experience would be to claim that they reveal the unrevealable. What then do they reveal?

In answering this question I should like to concentrate on a particular metaphysical view with which we are all familiar, namely materialism. Of course the word "materialism" is used to mean different things in different contexts; quite often it is little more than a term of abuse, thanks to the common association of materialism with the preference for sensual pleasures over states and conditions which are widely thought to be more estimable. I want now, however, to disregard these moral overtones and to consider materialism solely as a system of speculative ideas. The point I am

hoping to decide will be best approached by asking how the central doctrine of such a system should be expressed.

Will it do to say that a materialist is a man committed to a thesis about what there is, the thesis namely that nothing exists except matter and its modifications? It is certainly in this way that many people think of the subject, so far as they think of it at all. But this formulation would, if accepted, be open to immediate objections. Suppose in the first place that, in the statement that nothing exists except matter, we took the term "matter" in what may be called the ordinary, non-controversial sense. The statement would on this interpretation be false, for there clearly are many things, for example thoughts and feelings, which are not material in this sense. But if the materialist in consequence shifts his ground and tells us that the matter of which he speaks is not the genus of which wood and stone are species, but is something totally distinct from anything we know immediately which lies beyond and explains whatever falls within experience, he saves his thesis from falsity only at the cost of rendering it unverifiable. The Matter of which everything is now said to consist is as inaccessible as the Platonic world of Forms. No empirical considerations can count either for or against its existence, whose postulation is therefore entirely otiose.

But is it necessary to suppose that those who argue for or against metaphysical materialism are engaged in a dispute about what there is? It seems to me that a quite different account of the subject can and should be given. For when I wonder, as in point of fact I quite often do, whether materialism may not be true, I am not asking myself if it may not be the case that I am literally only a lump of matter, or even a lump of Matter. What I ask myself,

put crudely, is rather whether natural scientists do not have the answers to all the important questions, with the result that I am, whatever my pretensions to the contrary, nothing more than a part of nature. Here what concerns me is the validity or invalidity of a particular way of taking things, not a question of fact in the narrow sense. I know that no limits can be set to the range of phenomena on which scientists can be expected to pronounce, and I find that on many topics what they say has an air of finality about it; the possibility I now face is whether they may not have the last word to say on all important issues. If they have, then the scientific way of taking things must be allowed to hold the field against all alternative ways including those which see men as independent rational agents. The thesis that it does is the thesis of materialism, which I should accordingly formulate as holding that there is nothing that cannot be satisfactorily explained in scientific or natural terms.

There are many points in this formula which call for further comment. To begin with something relatively unimportant, I may be told that there is no such thing as a single scientific way of taking things. Contrary to what was once supposed, the sciences are a confederation of independent states, not a centrally controlled empire dominated by physics. I accept the possibility, but remark that it would, if correct, require me either to define the term "materialism" more closely or allow that it was generic; it would not rule out the *kind* of definition I have given. In fact the formula supplied is sufficiently specific for several important conclusions to be drawn.

Materialism on this view of the matter is not a doctrine about what is to be found in the world, still less out of it. A materialist does not have to claim to know any existence propositions of which

his opponents are ignorant; what he has to claim is ability to get into perspective, or understand, things with which everyone either is or could be familiar. It is true that the materialist position carries with it the denial of certain existence claims which have been made by other philosophers, for instance the Aristotelian claim that there exist purely spiritual beings. But the materialist can make this denial without having to presuppose any special insight into the Beyond: he makes it because he is convinced that the facts do not warrant any such assumption, in the same way as most of us deny the existence of fairies because we see that the facts do not justify our assuming it. He could, if he chose, stop short of absolute denial of a claim like Aristotle's, and say only that there was nothing to be said for it; to counter him, an opponent would have to point to *phenomena* which materialism leaves unexplained.

Materialism as I am understanding it is not itself a scientific thesis; it is a doctrine which asserts the omniscience of science. A materialist makes a pronouncement about science, but does not necessarily engage in any form of scientific activity himself. The results which scientists establish are of vital concern when we come to make up our minds about materialism, yet it would be quite wrong to suppose that materialists simply repeat those results. What they add can be brought out if we say that, whereas scientists assert their conclusions as true, materialists want to say that these conclusions embody *the* truth on the subject in question. The point can perhaps be elucidated further if we pay attention to the word "satisfactorily" in the formula suggested above. A materialist may be said to be a man who finds the scientific explanation (I am assuming here that we can thus speak in the singular) of a situation or happening the convinc-

ing or satisfactory explanation, and who is persuaded that there is nothing which cannot be explained in a similar manner; and this at once differentiates him from the ordinary scientific enquirer and reveals the circumstances in which his theory is generated. A working scientist may well believe that there is nothing which cannot be considered from the scientific point of view, but he will not necessarily hold that this is all that can be said on the matter. Suppose, for example, that a physiologist establishes that thinking is always accompanied by certain electrical changes in the brain: he may then be ready to assert that, from his special point of view, thinking can be explained in terms of such changes. But if you ask him if his pronouncement is to be taken as ruling out, or diminishing the importance of, other sorts of approach to thinking, for instance that we make when we grade arguments as valid or invalid, he will probably reply that this question falls outside his competence: his is a departmental enquiry, concerned to investigate what may well be only a single aspect of a complex situation. But a materialist metaphysician shows no such caution or modesty, nor for that matter do his metaphysical rivals. They start from the conclusions the physiologist has established, consider these in the light of other ways of taking the situation which they are said to explain, and then presume to pronounce on which of these ways gives the true account. In taking this decision they will naturally not confine themselves to considering a single case, or even a single type of case: the strength of materialism springs not from any particular scientific achievement, but from the ability of scientists to say something striking and pertinent on a wide variety of unexpected and unconnected topics. It is when we take what physiology establishes about the brain, connect it

with the achievement of cyberneticists and remember such things as the theories of Freud about religion and the work done by sociologists on the social conditioning of ideas that we are tempted to think that, whatever the difficulties, alternative ways of approaching the world must be given up and it must henceforth be allowed that scientists have the real answers.

If the case of materialism is typical of metaphysics (a question I shall consider at a later stage of this essay), we can perhaps put the general position as follows. There are times when human beings ask themselves what they are to make of the scheme of things entire, in what terms they are to take or seek to comprehend it. This is not a question which arises inside any particular discipline or form of activity; its origin is to be found in the puzzlement which thoughtful people experience when they reflect on the implications of what particular disciplines establish and the presuppositions with which particular activities are conducted. There is *prima facie* an incompatibility, to give an obvious example, between taking religion at its face value and accepting anything like a Freudian account of the subject; and though we can, if we choose, shut our eyes to one or the other, to do so leaves a feeling of acute intellectual discomfort. As if by a sort of instinct we hanker after a unitary reading of experience, a reading which will do justice to all the phenomena and enable everything to be seen in its place. It is readings of this kind which metaphysicians presume to offer. They present considerations (with what cogency I shall discuss later) in favor of this or that way of seeing the world and human experience as a whole. And the enlightenment which results when people are convinced by their arguments is similar to the enlightenment we get when someone ex-

plains to us a complicated literary text: we think we now see how each part of what is before us hangs together, and can get the whole into perspective.

There is a persistent tradition which connects metaphysics with the assertion of synthetic *a priori* truths. I think myself that the tradition is a correct one, though the "truths" spoken of are very different from what traditional critics of metaphysics have supposed. The synthetic *a priori* "truth" which lies at the basis of materialism might be stated in the words: it is out of the question that there should be anything which cannot be satisfactorily explained in natural terms. It is obvious enough when we think about the matter that we are not here dealing with a supposed truth of fact: no amount of scrutiny of the available evidence could establish a principle of such unrestricted generality. It is equally obvious that we are not dealing with an analytic proposition: no breach of the laws of logic is involved in its denial. A principle of this kind has a different status from either of these sorts of proposition; it is of a higher logical order than even the most general truth of fact, in so far as it embodies, or expresses, our fundamental approach to the facts. If we wish to characterize it as synthetic *a priori* (and there are some grounds for choosing this description, despite the many misunderstandings its use tends to provoke), we must think of it as, roughly at least, sharing the status of the synthetic *a priori* principles for which Kant argued in the second half of the *Analytic*. Like them, it has a function in ordering experience without being itself read out of experience. And like them it has no real significance except when brought to bear on empirical situations.³

It is idle to deny that metaphysicians

are in a certain sense dogmatists. They show their cloven hooves in the confidence with which they advocate their particular points of view, and the incredulity with which they greet any suggestion that they might be mistaken. But we should not put too hasty a construction on these facts. It would be a mistake to contrast metaphysicians with empirical enquirers as men who have closed minds as opposed to men who have open minds and frame their theories to fit the evidence rather than the reverse. For in the first place it is by no means true that competent metaphysicians take up their positions without considering evidence: as I have suggested, metaphysical theories claim to do justice to all sides of experience, and any metaphysician worth his salt must be constantly considering whether his particular theory lives up to this pretension. Nor could it be claimed that theories of this kind are such that nothing that occurs can refute them, though the point is, as we shall see, a delicate one. What has to be admitted, and indeed stressed, is that a metaphysician is of his nature a man with a point of view to advance, and to advance a point of view in this context is in effect to issue a series of injunctions. A metaphysician is committed to the correctness of his point of view just as a moralist is committed to the correctness of the moral principles he urges on us. If we do not hold a moralist's confidence against him (how could he do his job at all if he did not believe in the principles he advocates?), no more should we reproach a metaphysician for advancing his position as finally true. You cannot at once assign categorical status to a principle and treat it as an everyday empirical hypothesis.

There is one further point about metaphysical theories on which it will be useful to remark at this stage, which can again be made most effectively if we

³ See further my article *Categories* in "Kant-Studien," 1953-4.

consider the special case of materialism. A materialist not only offers a scheme of ideas inside which, as he says, sense can be made of whatever falls within human experience; he builds his scheme round a central point, the idea of the whole of reality operating as a vast unthinking machine. An idea of this kind is perhaps imaginative rather than strictly intellectual, providing as it does a sort of picture of what the metaphysician means to convey; but it should not for that reason be discounted. Not only can such an idea have a powerful effect on those who come into contact with the system; its place in the thought of the metaphysician himself is also all-important, since it constitutes the "intuition" or "insight" from which he starts and to which he constantly returns. Certainly if a metaphysician had nothing more to offer than such an idea we should scarcely call him a philosopher at all, but the value of his whole system can all the same not be assessed without taking its central idea into account. To isolate, and enter imaginatively into, its central insight is in consequence of extreme importance when we come to study any particular metaphysical system: to put it crudely, we need to know what makes the metaphysician in question "tick," and failing such knowledge our criticisms of his work, however seemingly cogent, will in all likelihood strike its author as wholly wide of the mark.⁴

II

I SHOULD claim for the foregoing discussion at least the merit of being based on a concrete case instead of proceeding, as so many discussions of metaphysics have, entirely in the abstract. It remains, however, to ask whether an account of metaphysics which so obviously leans on a single instance can be satisfactorily

extended to others, and in particular whether it can be extended to cover the classical systems. Needless to say, only the scrappiest observations on this subject can be made within the compass of an article.

Let me say at once that I agree with Professor Ryle that many metaphysicians at any rate have seen their task as being to "assert the existence or occurrence of things unseen and give for these assertions purely philosophical or conceptual reasons."⁵ Plato answers this description, and so, no doubt, do theistic philosophers like Aquinas. There have, it is true, been attempts to interpret Plato's philosophy in a way which plays down his apparent insistence on the existence of transcendent Forms and tries to re-interpret the latter as no more than limiting concepts, to be used in the judging of phenomena; just as there have been persons who have striven to eliminate all mention of the supersensible in religion, on the pretence that God is no more than the Eternal not ourselves which makes for Righteousness or (in a more modern version) that "God exists" means roughly the same as "Love one another." It would, however, be only candid to allow that the first view has won no more support among Platonic scholars than has the second among theologians. Yet it would be wrong to fly to the other extreme and assume that because Plato and Aquinas had an undeniable belief in transcendent realities they were totally without interest in things empirical, when everything suggests that they saw an intimate connection between the two. It would be still more wrong to suppose that every metaphysician who uses a terminology with apparent ontological implications—I am thinking here of writers like Hegel or Bradley—is to be taken *au pied de la*

⁴ Compare Russell on Bradley, or for that matter Bradley on Russell.

⁵ *The Nature of Metaphysics*, ed. D. F. Pears (London, 1957), p. 144.

lettre with the crudest literalness. No doubt metaphysicians are always apt to charm or bewitch their readers with language which suggests that they are revealing new facts; but if we study them with charity we need not always put that construction on their work.

I shall sketch here very briefly two cases in which a different sort of interpretation is at least plausible.⁶

The Metaphysics of Aristotle. It is well known that Aristotle described "first philosophy" as the science of "being as such," and that he said alternatively (this time entitling it "theology") that it was concerned with pure form. I think most readers find a real difficulty in connecting at any rate the first of these descriptions with the actual contents of the work now known as the *Metaphysics*. Nor is it altogether easy to trace the thread which links the multiform discussions of that far from simple book. I suggest that we must take account of the following features or factors if we are to grasp what is central in Aristotle's thought.

First and most obviously, the concept of substance: the Aristotelian world-picture is, in the first place, that of a plurality of substances or subjects to which things happen. By a substance Aristotle meant, initially at any rate, a self-subsistent entity, and if he had been asked for instances of such entities he would have pointed to particular men

or horses. It is such things, as the argument of the *Categories* makes clear, which have properties or stand in relations. But not everything which can have properties and stand in relations is for Aristotle a substance: waterfalls, pieces of land and statues (all of them "continuants" in the modern sense) might satisfy this requirement without qualifying as substances for Aristotle.

Second, the concept of nature, which modifies the Aristotelian concept of substance and explains the exceptions just noted. A substance is something which is self-subsistent or exists by nature. Now "nature" has for Aristotle a sense which it no longer has for us: it is connected in his thought with the idea of growth or life. What exists by nature is what is alive and growing. And the proper way to look at growth is to see it as the making actual of what was previously only there potentially, or, more intelligibly, as the imposition on a certain matter of a form which the growing thing shares with other specimens of its kind.

Third, the doctrine of the four causes, which connects closely with the linked distinctions potentiality/actuality and matter/form. This doctrine, together with the doctrine of substance, embodies Aristotle's characteristic way of looking at the world and is thus the clue to his metaphysics. It offers a way, or perhaps one should say an interconnected set of ways, of explaining both why things are what they are and why they change as they do. The notions of formal and material causation help us to understand things from a static point of view, those of efficient and final causation serve to make change intelligible. And underlying the whole analysis is the model of a biological specimen which is to be seen as embodying a specific form which it realizes more and more fully as it grows to maturity.

The ideas I have mentioned quite

⁶ Since I first gave the lecture on which this essay is based Professor J. N. Findlay has published his *Hegel: a Re-examination* (London, 1958), which is a sustained attempt to argue that Hegel's philosophy was "this-worldly" rather than "other-worldly." Hegel, according to Findlay, was an "empiricist" and an "anti-metaphysician," in so far as he would have nothing to do with the transcendent. Findlay contrasts Hegel with Bradley, but I think myself that Bradley's concept of the Absolute can be interpreted along similar lines. See *Bradley et la Métaphysique*, forthcoming in "Les Études philosophiques."

obviously color, indeed constitute, Aristotle's thought on many subjects. Not only are they appealed to in his biological writings proper: he attempts to extend their use backwards into physics and chemistry (though it must be admitted with very little success), and forwards into psychology, morals and politics. His achievement in interpreting the details of experience clearly depends in no small measure on the bold, interpretative scheme which he seeks everywhere to apply. Because of this there is a massive impressiveness in Aristotelianism and a living quality which it retains today despite all that has happened in the scientific world since its ideas were first formulated.

What I am saying is that Aristotle's "ontology," so far at least as we have considered it here, is a misnomer. It is not a doctrine of what there is, but a statement of how we are to take things. Its inspiration, as will be apparent, is biological, and it consists in essentials of an attempt to apply ideas which make sense in biology to all the phenomena of experience. That Aristotle himself applied these ideas with only limited success is not to the point: what is important is that he conceived the general notion and worked out the main lines of its application. Whatever its shortcomings, his scheme of concepts had the great merit of enabling him to connect a vast mass of diverse phenomena in a way which seemed convincing to many subsequent generations and has not entirely lost its appeal even today. It is for this reason more than any other that he deserves to be classed as a major metaphysician.

I should not dispute that this account of Aristotle's metaphysics is, even on its own level, historically incomplete. Aristotle no less than Plato believed in the existence of purely spiritual substances, and indeed suggested sometimes that

"first philosophy" was properly concerned only with questions about their existence and nature. And the reasons he offers for accepting their existence are conceptual reasons, even if it is in connection with his astronomy that he makes his most determined attempt to argue for them. To this extent Aristotle's metaphysics fit what I called the official account better than the one by which I have tried to replace it. Aristotle's commitment to the Unmoved Mover cannot be ignored, but equally it should not be overstressed. Whatever the truth about Plato, there can be no doubt of Aristotle's abiding interest in the here and now; it is with this world that he is in practice ultimately concerned even in speaking of pure form. To single out this interest and make it central in our interpretation of Aristotelianism is accordingly not inappropriate, and to this extent it may be said that he can be brought under the scheme outlined above.⁷

The Metaphysics of Kant. To put forward Kant as the author of a metaphysical system may well seem strange, in view of the devastating criticism he himself brought against metaphysics. I maintain nevertheless that Kant had a distinctive metaphysical point of view of his own, one which had, and continues to have, a considerable appeal. Perhaps the best approach to this is through the famous pronouncement in which he expressed his admiration for those two very different things, the starry heavens above and the moral law within. The point of Kant's philosophy was, of course, to do justice to both. He wanted in the first place to say that no limits could be set to the scientific enterprise of uncovering the secrets of nature: investigation of the

⁷ It may be useful to remember in this connection that one of Aristotle's aims was to refute materialism, which he had met with in the work of Empedocles and Democritus.

starry heavens and of all the phenomena of the natural world must not only proceed without captious objections from moralists and theologians, but must be recognized as affording the possibility of discoveries about man himself of a new and surprising kind. To support, and indeed press, the claims of science, by arguing that nothing which fell within experience could be granted exemption from scientific scrutiny, was one of the two dominating motives in Kant's thought. The other was his desire to hold that all this could be done without any sacrifice of the moral point of view. Scientific investigation of man as a phenomenon could coexist with the treatment of man as a moral being, for morals were a matter of practice, of acting as if we were free of determination by natural causes, rather than of knowledge.

So far we have not metaphysics but metaphysical neutralism, a view, much favored today, which holds that you can avoid the sort of choice with which I said the metaphysician was faced by distinguishing different uses of language, and arguing that non-theoretical uses have no theoretical implications. In Kant's official doctrine morals are practical and science theoretical, which means that no clash between the two need arise. But it may be doubted whether he wishes merely to juxtapose moral and scientific activity; he wishes also to explain the juxtaposition. It is for this reason that he introduces the contrast of phenomenon and noumenon, which are perhaps the key concepts of his philosophy. Man as an object of scientific scrutiny is said to be phenomenon, whereas when he acts morally he transfers himself to the noumenal world. And while Kant insists over and over again that we can know nothing of noumena, the fact remains that he thinks the concept of noumenon gets more than negative significance once we adopt the

moral point of view. Kantian commentators have long been puzzled about how Kant can confine knowledge to appearances and still talk about things in themselves: the solution is, I suggest, that he believed there were things in themselves because he believed that moral agents were more than phenomena. We might not know about ourselves as noumena, but we were at least well assured that we were such. I do not see how sense can be made of Kant's complex position unless this is taken as true, unless, that is to say, we regard him as having believed, whatever his professions, that man is both phenomenon and noumenon, or, if you like, both flesh and spirit. Only on this hypothesis will his claim to have shown the falsity of materialism make sense; only with it can we explain his evident hankering after knowledge of the noumenal, coming out for instance in the surprising remark that the geometer would "gladly exchange the whole of his science" for a solution of the problems propounded in the Antinomies.⁸ The very choice of the terms "phenomenal" and "noumenal," with the implication that as the phenomenal is the apparent the noumenal must be the real, argues that for Kant metaphysical neutralism cannot be finally true.

If we are to class Kant as a metaphysician at all, we must set him down as a dualist. But it scarcely needs to be added that his is a dualism with a difference. He continuously urges on us that man is both phenomenon and more than phenomenon, but is just as insistent that nothing can be known about him in the latter capacity. It is only in moral contexts and in relation to moral experience that we find real significance for the concept of the noumenal; and when we do so the result is not knowledge in the strict sense but "pure practical belief." It may be thought to be stretching lan-

⁸ *Critique of Pure Reason* B 491/A 463.

guage to describe this as a metaphysical point of view and say that it offers a framework inside which sense can be made of all sides of human experience. But that Kant thought of it in this way seems hard to deny. Nor could it be argued that the general scheme was peculiar to his narrow and unsympathetic mind; on the contrary, it gave expression, as no other philosophy has done, to important elements in Protestantism. Whatever its shortcomings from the point of view of the speculatively minded, it may nonetheless contain as many concessions to speculation as can reasonably be made.

III

ASSUMING now that the view of metaphysics argued for in the first part of this paper has been sufficiently if not fully authenticated, I want to conclude by asking if it can meet a criticism to which metaphysicians have been persistently subjected, the criticism that there are no criteria for deciding whether what they maintain is false or true. It is commonly said that whereas in science, mathematics, or even in history we know, in principle at any rate, what considerations will rule out a statement as unacceptable, there is really nothing comparable in the case of metaphysics. Metaphysical assertions are such that they are compatible with any facts whatsoever; a circumstance which would certainly make them empty of significance.

Before addressing ourselves to this problem it will be useful to consider just why we can get clear decisions about truth or falsity in science and mathematics. The answer is surely that investigators in these fields work inside a framework of rules which are not themselves thought to be open to question. Not only do science and mathematics have clearly defined tasks; in both there are agreed procedures for dealing with them.

The procedures may change, even change radically, over a period of years, but the change is all the same a piecemeal one, in the sense that not everything is altered at once. As a result individual students of these subjects know what their colleagues are up to, and have relatively little difficulty in deciding when they are right.

The contrast between science and history is instructive in this connection. Many professional historians have claimed scientific status for their results, and their main ground for doing so would seem to be their conviction that historical questions are definitely decidable. Confront a competent historian with a problem and its solution, and he will be able to tell you whether the solution is correct, or at least whether it is hopelessly wide of the mark. But there is reason to think that this result can be attained, at any rate where something more than a simple question of fact is concerned, only when historians agree in their fundamental judgments of importance. In point of fact professional historians in Great Britain and America are virtually unanimous in their ideas about what is really important in history, with the result that philosophical doubts about the objectivity of history strike them as exceedingly far-fetched. If they lived in countries where Marxism, or even Roman Catholicism, had a greater intellectual impact, they might well be less sanguine. A liberal historian who was convinced of the correctness of his reading of, say, the French Revolution would be hard put to it to prove his point to a Marxist, just because of their differences in fundamentals.

Something of the same situation arises in morals, though here, of course, we are not concerned with assertions but with decisions. As modern philosophers are never tired of telling us, morals are a matter of practice, and this means that

moral questions arise in a context where people are constantly making what are generally agreed to be right or wrong moves. Morals could not be the working system it is if the thing to do in a moral quandary could never be properly specified. But though the case for a general moral skepticism has been much exaggerated, it certainly seems to make better sense at some times than at others. It has a relatively high plausibility in conditions where there is much disagreement about fundamental moral rules, a relatively low one in societies where people are generally satisfied with established ways of going on. In the latter case people are apt to confuse moral judgments with judgments of fact, since the rules are clear and the only question is whether the case under judgment comes under them or not.

All this suggests that the comparison commonly made between scientific and metaphysical theories in respect to their claims to truth is at best seriously misleading. Clear decisions about whether to accept or reject a scientific proposition are possible because science is an activity which proceeds under agreed rules, rules which, among other things, specify what is to count as evidence for or against. In metaphysics, by contrast, we are not so much working under rules as advocating them, with the result that objective proof, proof that is to say which any right-thinking person would acknowledge, is impossible. In this context the dispute turns on what is meant by the phrase "right-thinking person."

It may be thought that this exaggerates the difficulty of metaphysics. After all, we can choose rationally between different sets of rules if we are clear about the requirements which a good set of rules must fulfill. Might it not be claimed that everybody acknowledges at least one such requirement in a set of metaphysical rules, namely that it should

offer an explanation of *all* the facts? If there are obvious facts which a metaphysical system fails to cover, it is so far deficient.

Unhappily this test looks more promising in theory than it turns out to be in practice. To see this we have only to consider its application to materialism. Many people reject materialism on the ground that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in this philosophy, but would a materialist agree that his philosophy left anything out? Suppose it were said that he failed to take account of, say, the phenomena of religious experience or the compelling character of the feeling of moral obligation. His comment would surely be that he not only mentioned these phenomena but explained them, and explained them in the only way which could make them intelligible. In the case of religion, for example, he showed how it was, i.e. in what physical, psychological and perhaps social conditions, people came to have what are commonly called religious experiences and why they were disposed to put a certain construction on those experiences. And if it were suggested to him that this explanation simply omits what is the essence of the matter, in so far as it says nothing about the cognitive content of such experiences, he would reply that it is an illusion to suppose that they have any such content. Having a religious experience is perhaps like being vividly aware of the presence of another person, with the difference that in this case there is no other person to be aware of. The important point, however, according to the materialist, is that we can see how the illusion develops and what purpose it serves.

The trouble about testing a theory like that of materialism by its capacity to cover all the facts is that there is no general agreement about what "the facts" are. Facts exist, or perhaps we should

say obtain, only from particular points of view, and here points of view are in dispute. The consequence of this is that the metaphysician is necessarily judge in his own case, for though he must admit to an obligation to take account of all the facts as he sees them, it is in the last resort for him to say what is fact and what not. His office confers on him the duty of giving an overall interpretation, but simultaneously allows him a veto on accepting anything which cannot be fitted into his scheme.

For these reasons I am altogether less confident than I once was that there can be objective tests of the truth or falsity of metaphysical structures. Yet I also feel that it would be absurd to treat acceptance or rejection of a metaphysical view as something which is wholly arbitrary, a matter of personal taste or particular liking. Such an account is just not true of actual metaphysical thinking, as anyone who has tried to make up his mind about materialism will witness. In such a case there certainly are considerations which will strengthen or weaken confidence in either sort of conclusion, considerations whose relevance to the problem will be acknowledged by materialist and anti-materialist alike even if their judgment of the lesson to be drawn from them varies. There are circumstances in which an honest man finds himself forced to accept or reject a theory of this sort, knows that, failing further developments, he for his part must acknowledge it to be true or false.

I suggest that in thinking about conviction and proof in metaphysics we ought to have in mind, not the relatively tight arguments of natural scientists, but the altogether looser procedures followed by critics of literature and the arts. We are all familiar with the situation where there exists a plurality of conflicting interpretations of a major work of literature like *Hamlet*. A critic

who puts forward such an interpretation would certainly claim that there are considerations which make his own theory superior to those of his rivals; he is convinced, that is to say, that his is a reasoned case. But he might very well, if he were sensible, allow that there could be no knock-down demonstration of the correctness of his point of view. To the skeptic who persisted in finding his views implausible he could give only one piece of advice: to go back to the text, make an honest effort to see it in the way recommended, and then see whether fresh enlightenment did not result. He could have no answer to a critic unwilling to make that experiment.

What is true of literary appreciation here is also true of metaphysics. Much metaphysical, like much literary, discussion turns on whether or not a theory avoids inconsistency, and this, of course, is a matter that can be definitively decided, once we can be certain that the concepts of the theory have been properly grasped by its critics. But there is another species of objection which people bring against metaphysicians, to the effect that their views are not sufficiently comprehensive or fail to cover the facts adequately. I have already explained why I think objections of this sort cannot be pushed home: there are no neutral data which a metaphysical theory has to cover on pain of being pronounced untrue. But it does not follow that the metaphysician criticized will be insensitive to objections of this sort, at least when they are put forward by critics who have made a real effort to see the world as he sees it; he will try to show that he can meet the points made, or will try to adjust his system to meet them. And if he can do neither he may even abandon it.

In the last resort the only test of truth which can be applied in metaphysics is a personal test: we have to try, by an

effort which is imaginative as well as intellectual, to grasp for ourselves what the metaphysician is saying, to consider its application to the diverse sides of human experience, more particularly to those where its initial plausibility is at its lowest, and then finally to pronounce for ourselves on its adequacy. The arguments which others, including the meta-

physician himself, bring to bear on the subject, may incline us to a certain conclusion, but they cannot necessitate our acceptance of it, as similar arguments can in the scientific field. Perhaps this is the real reason why metaphysics is misdescribed as the queen of the sciences: it is not a science at all, but belongs to the humanities.

FILOSOFIA

an international philosophical quarterly edited by Augusto Guzzo

In presenting the first issue of FILOSOFIA in January 1950, A. Guzzo, its founder and editor, stressed the need of understanding, sympathetically yet critically, the manifold activities of the human spirit, and warned against "the arteriosclerosis of dogmatism." In a time when even some of the better philosophical quarterlies have tended to promote partisan ideological attitudes, it is refreshing to see the wide range of philosophical interests which *Filosofia* has served in the first decade of its existence.

Despite the relative ignorance of contemporary Italian philosophical writing in the U.S., it is noteworthy that R. Carnap has praised F. Barone for his excellent study of Logical Positivism, substantial parts of which first appeared in *Filosofia*. Another indication of the consistent high level of the journal, is the statement of the pre-eminent Kantian scholar, H. J. de Vleeschauwer, on "the revival of Kantian studies in Italy, which group themselves chiefly around the periodical *Filosofia*"; he explicitly mentions "the very instructive studies of Barone on the symbolic and formal logic of the German enlightenment . . . and of Mathieu on the transcendental deduction," and concludes that "Tonelli's work is one of the most important contributions to the history of Kantianism since the last war, and it will probably remain as such for a long time."

Besides Guzzo's own chapters from his life-project, *L'uomo*, notice should also be given to the perceptive studies of V. Eco on the aesthetic problem in St. Thomas, of N. Bosco's interpretations of Peirce, and of A. Maddalena's searching studies of Greek tragedy.

The first international issue was published in 1959; besides the article of Prof. Walsh, reprinted in this issue of *Cross Currents*, there are contributions by C. Werner, H. W. Schneider, and J. Ebbinghaus.

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GERMAN CATHOLICISM IN 1933

ERNST-WOLFGANG BÖCKENFÖRDE

FOR GERMAN Catholics as well as for Evangelical Christians, the total military and political collapse of the National Socialist government in the spring of 1945, after a twelve-year rule, marked an hour of liberation from an increasingly oppressive persecution. German Catholics, led and strengthened by their bishops and clergy, had on the whole resisted this oppression and had shown themselves firm, convinced opponents of National Socialism. Thus in the political reconstruction that was now necessary there automatically fell to them an important share, which became even greater through the confidence in them demonstrated in many ways by the three victorious Western Powers. Understandably, this situation was not opportune for raising the question and discussing in detail whether and how far the Catholics and their spiritual leaders had not themselves helped to establish the National Socialist regime in its beginnings, and had cooperated with it. German Catholicism was satisfied with its demonstrable resistance to the National Socialist system and without hesitation seized the opportunities that were offered for new effort and influence. It did not concern itself more closely with its own past. Of course, that was to no one's advantage.

So much the more urgent is it that

This important article appeared (Feb. 1961) in the outstanding German Catholic bi-monthly HOCHLAND (Kaiser-Ludwigsplatz 15, Munich, \$5 a year).

Because of the widespread controversy that has already developed around this essay, a summary of a counter-statement is presented at its conclusion, cf. p. 303.

now, after historical examination of the facts has made available a wealth of material and has shed some light upon many heretofore obscure events,¹ the question of the conduct of German Catholicism in the year 1933 should be raised. This holds true regardless of whether the results which are brought to light in the process are felt at the moment to be comfortable or uncomfortable. One's obligation to historical truth does not admit of half-way measures, and facing up to this obligation has time and again proved to be the best way of serving one's cause. Certainly, in times of open or concealed ideological conflict every impartial statement and every unbiased argument can be misused like a poisoned arrow. But anyone who considers a word of critical reflection within the Church to be opportune only when it could not be turned against her by an enemy, would have to wait to the end of time. It is part of the conditions of existence for the Church that at no time does she lack enemies lying in wait for her.

Hence it is not the purpose of these lines to raise belated accusations in any direction and in this way to "overcome" the past. The civil war that exists under the disguise of political purges has already rendered difficult enough any fac-

¹ Rudolf Morsey, "Die Deutsche Zentrums-partei," in *Das Ende der Parteien 1933*, edited by Matthias and Morsey (Düsseldorf, 1960); Ludwig Kaas, "Tagebuch, 7.-20. April 1933," and "Briefwechsel zum Reichskonkordat," ed. Rudolf Morsey, *Stimmen der Zeit*, 166 (Sept., 1960), p. 422 ff., 167 (October, 1960), p. 11 ff. On Morsey's essay see now Karl Buchheim, "Warum das Zentrum unterging," *Hochland* (October, 1960), p. 15-27, and Robert Leiber, S.J., "Reichskonkordat und Ende der Zentrums-partei," *Stimmen der Zeit*, 167 (December, 1960), pp. 213-223.

tual discussion of the National Socialist period. Rather, it can only be a question of faithfully reporting what actually happened and of getting at the root of the mistakes that were made at that time. That is the easiest way to learn lessons and draw conclusions applicable to the present and to the future.

I

On the eve of the crucial year 1933, German Catholicism represented a social group that was firmly united on a religious-philosophical basis, organized in numerous occupational and professional associations, and bound together with a unified political program. It had left far behind the Ghetto situation of former times, and had attained a notable and recognized place in social and political life. Since the days of the *Kulturkampf* it had its political representation, very nearly its political home, in the Center Party (later also in the Bavarian Peoples Party). By virtue of this party it had attained a share in the democratic, parliamentary Weimar State which now stood in the midst of its crisis.

In the political leadership of German Catholics—and this deserves particular attention—the episcopate and clergy played a predominant role. This was the heritage of the *Kulturkampf*. In that struggle the Catholic people, facing a State that was threatening the right of their religion to exist, had clustered closely about their bishops and priests, who had offered the most direct opposition to the persecuting measures of the State. Since then, the people saw in the clergy their real leaders, even in the area of secular politics. To be sure, this did not become immediately evident while the founding generation of the Center was politically active; from the turn of the century, however, it became increasingly noticeable. From this situation it

came about spontaneously that a special authority and effectiveness were associated with the episcopal pronouncements on political questions. Moreover, the immediate political goal was the guarantee of religious-cultural freedom and of Church-related activity. The longer the clergy were active in the Center Party, the more they assumed a position of leadership. Thus the dominant role of the ecclesiastical element in the Center since the last party congress in 1928, and especially in the critical period of 1932-33, was not an expression of a clerical claim to leadership imposed on the Party from the outside; rather, it corresponded closely with the internal condition of German Catholicism as it had evolved since the *Kulturkampf*. "Under their [the bishops'] direction we cannot err." These words of a doughty Center delegate at the May 1933 congress symbolize the expectation animating the Catholic people regarding their ecclesiastical leaders. The German Catholics of course could not suspect that these very leaders would call on them to approve and support the National Socialist State.

That this did happen came so much the more unexpectedly since as late as the beginning of 1933 and even immediately after the "assumption of power," German Catholicism seemed firmly, unshakeably opposed to the National Socialist movement. In countless pastoral pronouncements the bishops had condemned the erroneous doctrines of the National Socialist movement, had warned of its dangers, and had forbidden active endorsement of the goals of the NSDAP, often even mere membership in it.² This

² The individual pronouncements are indicated in *Ecclesiastica, Archiv für zeitgenössische Kirchengeschichte*, ed. by the Catholic International Press Agency (KIPA), Freiburg (Switzerland), 13th year, No. 6, 2 Nov. 1933, p. 57 ff. The instances referred to are the decision of the episcopal ordinaries at Mainz on 30 Sept. 1930, the New Year's pronouncement of Cardi-

condemnation went so far in many dioceses as to exclude active National Socialists or even all party members (Mainz) from the sacraments and from Christian burial. The Center and the Bavarian People's Party stood in the very forefront of the battle against the National Socialists in the election of 5 March 1933, and despite the considerable obstacles placed in their way and in the way of their press by the government, they essentially kept their share of the votes and altogether won ninety-two seats (out of 647) in the Reichstag.

The political situation after the March election was as follows: the Center and the Bavarian Peoples Party were excluded from their key position in the Reichstag because the NSDAP and the DNVP together controlled an absolute majority of the votes. Thus it was possible to govern without the two parties. Together with the SPD, however, the Center and the BVP made up a considerable minority which, in the given situation, could block the two-thirds majority needed for constitutional amendments; they were thus in a position to prevent the legal suspension of the Weimar Constitution which the new government desired. For the inner stabilization and legal extension of the dictatorial authority which the National Socialists were aiming at, the crucial question in large measure was whether German Catholicism and its political representation were prepared to defend the Weimar Constitution as such and to restrain an anti-democratic government and parliamen-

nal Bertram in 1930, the instruction of the Bavarian bishops on 10 Feb. 1931, the decrees of the bishops of the Cologne province on 5 March 1931, and of the bishops of the Paderborn province on 10 March 1931, the statement of the bishop of Berlin on 20 March 1931. How clearly these warnings and admonitions of the bishops were understood is seen, among other sources, in the special issue of the Center newspaper, *Der Weckruf*, for April, 1931, 7th year, No. 4.

tary majority from legally grasping the total power of the State. Of course, this presupposed a willingness to resist the weariness of democracy which the years of crisis and the many political problems had induced, at least to this extent, that it was not this or that institution whose fate hung in the balance but rather the very essence of the parliamentary democratic state. Through the elections of 5 March 1933, Hitler certainly had acquired a chance of erecting a dictatorship, but that dictatorship was by no means established in a way that was legally or politically unassailable.

Here the facts and documents cited by Morsey speak quite clearly. As early as 6 March Msgr. Kaas, in his capacity as chairman of the Center Party, without sounding out the Party's sentiments, made an offer to the Vice-chancellor von Papen to forget the past; he let it be known that he was ready to cooperate (Morsey, pp. 355-56). In the party conferences and caucuses he resolutely advocated accepting the Enabling Act, and in the end he succeeded. This produced a sharp break with Brüning who clearly recognized the significance of the principle involved in the law for the annulment of the Weimar Constitution; to the very end he resisted its acceptance on legal and political grounds, and in this he was supported by prominent politicians of the party like Bolz, Wirth, Helene Weber, and others.⁸

Karl Bachem's notation of April 1933 (Morsey, pp. 434-35) shows how bitterly Kaas and Brüning disagreed. According to this notation, Brüning emphasized that the Center "could not cooperate and legalize this development, which was based on a violation of the law, materially even if not formally, and would completely obscure the very concept of Law. Legally the Weimar Repub-

⁸ Cf. Morsey, pp. 357-366; for the caucus session of 23 March, pp. 362-365.

lic still existed, and as a 'constitutional Party' the Center was bound to adhere to it." Bachem's comment on the dispute is: "Thus two incompatible views opposed each other: Brüning's, clearly a matter of principles, and Kaas', more or less opportunistic."

When Brüning nevertheless accommodated himself to the resolution of the majority caucus under Kaas' leadership and voted for the Enabling Act in the Reichstag session, we can only explain it as an excessive loyalty to his party and its caucus.

In his negotiations, Msgr. Kaas persuaded Hitler to include in the government's declaration some assurances concerning Church-State relations, the school question, and the irremovability of judges. Some people might have believed that accepting the Enabling Act was the quickest way of restricting the very broad Emergency Act of 28 February and of securing the retention of Center office-holders. But in exchange for these hopes and promises, for whose fulfillment there existed not the slightest security, the Center and BVP at one swoop legally eliminated popular representation and thereby surrendered the basis of the democratic constitution. The SPD remained true to itself and to the Constitution, and voted against the Enabling Act.

Obviously it was of concern to Msgr. Kaas and the majority of the politicians of the Center and BVP to come to terms with the new government if it was ready to make definite concessions in the areas of Church and school matters which were especially important for Catholics, and if it was accessible to Christian influence. That appeared more important than the defense of the democratic-parliamentary State of which they had been citizens for twelve years. As is now known from entries in Kaas' diary published in *Stimmen der Zeit*, on 24 March, the very day

after the passing of the Enabling Act, he went to Rome to discuss the new state of affairs with the Cardinal Secretary of State.⁴ When he went to Rome for the second and conclusive visit on 7 April, after a private interview with Hitler on 2 April, he explained to Papen that he fully recognized the new situation which had been created by Hitler's remarks on cultural affairs in his Reichstag address. Nothing could contribute more to the internal consolidation of the authoritarian government than the continuation of the policy enunciated there; consequently, "from inner conviction" he took his stand in favor of positive co-operation.⁵ In close accord with the Cardinal Secretary of State, Msgr. Kaas then joined in the negotiations for the Concordat which began on 9 April. While the Center was being subjected to increasingly oppressive measures by the National Socialists, Msgr. Kaas assured Hitler, in a telegram on his birthday, 20 April, of his "unswerving cooperation."⁶ Thus the political representative of German Catholicism had already in his own mind decided the fate of the party which he led, bartering the stabilization of the National Socialist government for the securing of ecclesiastical-cultural goals. Brüning did not assume the chairmanship of the party until May.⁷

⁴ This first journey of Msgr. Kaas to Rome, which is significant for the problem of the Concordat and the end of the Center, was completely overlooked by R. Leiber, S.J.; cf. footnote 1 above.

⁵ Ludwig Kaas, "Tagebuch," *op. cit.*, p. 426 ff.

⁶ The telegram read as follows: "Today sincere blessings and wishes, and the assurance of unswerving cooperation in the great work of the creation of an inwardly united, socially pacified, and externally free Germany." Morsey, p. 379.

⁷ In a letter of December, 1947, Brüning speaks of the "more than strange policy" of Msgr. Kaas. Concerning the enlistment of the Cardinal Secretary of State and other Vatican

In this attitude towards the National Socialist government Msgr. Kaas did not stand alone. Even before 20 March 1933, the Catholic press in many places had already shown that it was ready to recognize the new "authority" which it did not dare oppose any longer.⁸ Of basic significance was the declaration at that time of the Fulda bishops' conference, which was published as early as 28 March, five days after the passing of the Enabling Act. In this declaration, on the basis of Hitler's Reichstag address of 23 March, the "general admonitions and prohibitions" against cooperation with the NSDAP, which had been in force for years, were revoked and Catholics were admonished to be loyal to the "legitimate authority," despite the fact that not a single point in the National Socialist party platform had been changed. Thus the situation that had been created by the enactment of the Enabling Act was "spiritually" legitimized and political opposition of Catholics against the new government was denied any basis in conscience.⁹

The path that had been entered upon in this way had to lead quickly to a progressive *rapprochement* with the Na-

prelates in the cause of Catholic cooperation with the new State, cf. on the one hand the report of the Bavarian Ambassador Baron von Ritter for 24 April 1933, Kaas, "Tagebuch," *op. cit.*, p. 430, footnote 34, whose credibility is supported by the Diary of Msgr. Kaas; on the other hand, however, the conclusion of R. Leiber, S.J., *op. cit.* (cf. footnote 2 above), pp. 214-217.

⁸ Thus Alphons Nobel, *Der Katholik im neuen Reich* (Augsburg, 1933), p. 10. On this point see the reprint of the leading article of the *Augsburger Postzeitung*. Cf. also Morsey, p. 354, n. 10.

⁹ According to Robert Leiber, S.J., *op. cit.*, p. 217, the immediate reaction of the Cardinal Secretary Pacelli to the bishops' declaration was: "Why must the German bishops come to terms with the government so quickly? If it must be done, couldn't they wait a month or so?"

tional Socialist government. For in order to obtain the envisaged guarantees in the ecclesiastical and cultural areas and to maintain Christian influence unabated, it was necessary fully to support the new regime and to make the attempt to direct it from the inside by actively cooperating with it. Thus a certain ambivalence comes to characterize the subsequent conduct of the German bishops. On the one hand, they interceded on behalf of the existing government employees, especially those of the Center Party, and demanded freedom and independence for Church organizations;¹⁰ on the other hand, the Catholic population heard more and more appeals for cooperation in the "new State" and for a positive integration into it. Not a few Catholics probably understood these appeals as being first and foremost tactical, chiefly those who were still convinced opponents of the National Socialist government. On the whole, however, these appeals cannot be denied a significant effect on Catholic and general public opinion, especially since the Center Party was literally without a head because of Msgr. Kass' sojourn in Rome without having previously resigned the chairmanship of the Party (Morsey, 370 ff., 377 ff.).

As early as 25 April at the diocesan synod Archbishop Gröber of Freiburg left no doubt that Catholics "may not reject the new State, but rather must in

¹⁰ Cf. the public notice of the bishops of the German Church's eastern province on 13 April 1933, and of the Upper Rhine Province on 15 April 1933, *Ecclesiastica*, 13th year, p. 457 ff.; further, the resolution of the Fulda bishops conference on 31 May 1933, on the question of the youth associations, in which it was stated, among other things: "A political constitution according to which the entire youth should be exclusively under the control and education of the State, within or outside of the school, the Church rejects as incompatible with the Church's teaching." Cf. *Die junge Front*, 2nd year, No. 26, 25 June 1933.

a positive way approve it and unhesitatingly cooperate with it."¹¹

In an address in Beuthen on 4 May, Cardinal Bertram declared that the new government did not merely intend to tolerate the Catholic Church but rather placed the greatest value on "the Church's playing an integral role in the life of the people." Their awareness of this gave rise to that "enthusiasm" with which the Catholics joined forces with the government.¹²

On 5 May the Bavarian bishops issued a joint pastoral letter in which the program of the new government was described as a design for a spiritual, moral and economic renovation of the people. It called for the cooperation of all who loved their country.

Then on 3 June followed the programmatic pastoral letter of all German bishops. The ambivalent attitude mentioned earlier is expressed here with particular clarity. On the one hand, the principles of the National Socialist State, especially the excessively strong emphasis on authority, are approved; but on the other hand, specific views and methods of the NSDAP are rejected, and demands are raised for the freedom of the Church and of Catholic organizations, and for the possibility of their working effectively. Then the final paragraph contains the following sentences: "Beloved people of our dioceses! When we bishops raise the demands enunciated above, it is not because of any latent reservation regarding the new State. By no means do we wish to deprive the State of the sources of strength within the Church, and we dare not do so, for only the strength of the people and the divine strength, streaming unconquerably from the life of the Church, can save and exalt us."¹³

¹¹ *Ecclesiastica*, 13th year, p. 475.

¹² Cf. *Die junge Front*, 3rd year, No. 2, 14 Jan. 1934.

¹³ *Germania*, No. 159, 12 June 1933; *Ecclesiastica*,

As Morsey reports (p. 393), after this pastoral message there set in a wave of resignations from the Center Party.

There was of course another attitude, which today attracts us like a lonely beacon of political insight and brave resolution. Franz Count von Galen, representative in the Prussian state assembly, who had already in March besought Brüning not to vote in favor of the Enabling Act, resigned his position as a representative after the Center's state assembly caucus under Msgr. Lauscher's leadership had resolved to vote in favor of the Prussian Enabling Act which in his opinion went even further. He publicly based his action on the fact that it was impossible for him to renounce voluntarily the constitutional obligation which he had accepted by his mandate and thereby to assume responsibility for laws issued on the basis of the Enabling Act.

The German bishops' support of the National Socialist government reached its climax during and after the conclusion of the Concordat in July, 1933.¹⁴

tica, 13th year, p. 468. The section on authority reads: "Next to the heightened love of the Fatherland and the Nation, our age is characterized by a surprisingly strong emphasis on authority and the unyielding demand for the organic incorporation of individuals and of groups into the sum total of the State. From the point of view of Natural Law, no community flourishes without authority, and the voluntary merging of one's self into the nation and obedient subordination to the legitimate national administration guarantees the restoration of the national strength and national greatness." After a reference to the value and meaning of authority within the Church, it goes on to say: "Therefore we Catholics encounter no difficulty in appreciating the new, strong emphasis on authority in the German body politic, and in readily subordinating ourselves to it; authority may be described not only as a natural virtue but rather as a supernatural one, because we see in every human authority a reflection of the divine dominion and a sharing in the eternal authority of God."

¹⁴ In official Catholic circles the conclusion

Despite former clear-cut warnings, and although Hitler's intervention on behalf of the Potempa murderers could hardly have been forgotten, he was publicly and almost without reservation considered to be the new authority; he was therefore considered capable of making treaties, and his words were readily accepted as those of a statesman. Thus no one seemed justified in continuing to harbor any doubts about the goals of the new Administration. The episcopal announcements, the pronouncements of the heads of religious orders, of chairmen of unions and organizations (for example, the Görres Society) went far beyond the limits of diplomatic discretion and of traditional methods of reconciliation. To avoid distorting the picture in our imagination, we must by all means keep in mind the fact that the full measure of Hitler's criminality had not yet been experienced at that time.

In his letter of thanks, written in the name of the Fulda bishops' conference, Cardinal Bertram confirmed the fact that the episcopate of all Germany's dioceses, as soon as Hitler's declaration made it possible to do so, had immediately proclaimed their "honest and joyful readiness" to cooperate with the new government "which has made the furthering of Christian education, the defense against godlessness and immorality, the sense of sacrifice for the common good,

of the Concordat was generally celebrated as an epochal event and it was most warmly hailed. Instead of many quotations that could be cited, see for example Eduard Hegel, "Gedanken zum Reichskonkordat," *Zeit und Volk*, I, 25 ff., and Ivo Zeiger, S.J., "Das Reichskonkordat," *Stimmen der Zeit*, 126 (1933-34), 1 ff. Zeiger considered the Concordat something "quite significant," and an expression of a "reversal of thought" in the area of religious and ecclesiastical politics. For him the Enabling Act was particularly justified because it created the basis for the government's making an unhindered break through the "luxuries of the parliamentary system." Pp. 2-3.

and the protection of the rights of the Church into the guiding stars of its efforts." ¹⁵

Cardinal Faulhaber concluded his handwritten letter, clothed in most enthusiastic sentiments, acknowledging "world-historical" accomplishment, with this assurance: "A sincere prayer wells up in our soul: May God preserve our Chancellor for his people;" he singled out for special attention what a "great accomplishment" this agreement with the Papacy signified for Germany's prestige "to the West and to the East, and in the eyes of the entire world." ¹⁶

In a thanksgiving service on the occasion of the conclusion of the Concordat, Archbishop Gröber admonished the Faithful not to stray from their good will towards our government; he had "unshakeable confidence" that the Führer would do his share of the work. Some time later he gave assurances that he stood "unreservedly" behind the government and the new Reich. ¹⁷ Bishop Berning of Osnabrück made similar declarations on the occasion of his inaugural oath as a Prussian state councillor: "The German bishops have long ago given their approval of the new State, not mere promises to acknowledge its authority such as can be taken for granted among Catholics. We serve the State with ardent love and with all our energies." ¹⁸

¹⁵ The exact wording in *Ecclesiastica*, 13th year, p. 322, and in A. Kupper, "Zur Geschichte des Reichskonkordats," *Stimmen der Zeit*, 163 (1958-59), p. 367.

¹⁶ Complete wording in Kupper, *op. cit.*, pp. 367-8.

¹⁷ On the one hand, see *Germania*, No. 225, 17 August 1933, and *Zeit und Volk*, I, p. 221; on the other hand, *Ecclesiastica*, 13th year, p. 475. It is difficult to reconcile these statements with R. Leiber's assertion, *op. cit.*, p. 219, that in July 1933 Archbishop Gröber's calm and deliberate judgment of the effects of the Concordat was that it gave the Church in Germany at least a few months' truce.

¹⁸ *Ecclesiastica*, 13th year, p. 477; *Zeit und Volk*, I, p. 441.

Of the same tenor were proclamations and pronouncements of Bishops Bornewasser of Trier and Kaller of Ermland, of Auxiliary Bishops Baumann in Paderborn and Burger in Freiburg, and also of Vicar-General Msgr. Steinmann of Berlin.¹⁹

The German episcopate may have believed that this was the way to direct the National Socialist regime and the domestic revolution of 1933 towards a Christian-authoritarian political order, and in that way to have everything turn out for the best. Nevertheless it quickly became evident to what a great extent the episcopate had become the prisoner of its own policy. Immediately after the March election, Hitler, with his peculiar political instinct, had recognized that a real inroad into the Catholic population on behalf of National Socialism could only be gained "if the Curia dropped the two parties [Center and Bavarian Peoples Party]" (Morsey, p. 354). Towards this goal, then, he had gone straight to work; it made no difference

¹⁹ Bishop Bornewasser on the Feast of Christ the King, 1933, in the cathedral at Trier: "With our heads high and with firm stride we enter the new Reich, and we are ready to serve it with the pledge of all our strength of our body and soul." *Ecclesiastica*, 13th year, p. 477. Bishop Kaller concluded an appeal for cooperation in the reconstruction of the Reich, of the economy and of the youth work with the call: "We want to be activists." "Unsere katholischen Aufgaben heute," *Zeit und Volk*, I, pp. 91-93. Auxiliary Bishop Baumann spoke in *Zeit und Volk*, I, p. 688, of the integration into the new State which could be "taken for granted," and of the cooperation in the reconstruction of our Nation which can be "just as much taken for granted." Auxiliary Bishop Burger declared: "The goals of the government have long been the goals of our Catholic Church," in "Unser Wille zur Tat," *Zeit und Volk*, I, p. 181 ff. Diocesan Chancellor Steinmann at the Catholic youth meeting in the Neukölln Stadium on 20 August 1933: "What we have all longed for and striven for, has become a fact. We have a Reich and a Führer, and we obey this Führer loyally and conscientiously." *Ecclesiastica*, 13th year, p. 476.

to him whether this "dropping" was achieved through the Vatican or through the German bishops.

For the sake of ecclesiastical and cultural guarantees which they desired and expected to attain, and in order to preserve "Christian" influence, the German bishops at once, despite the fact that there was no external or internal crisis for the Church, threw their authority into the scales in favor of the National Socialist government—which was by no means firmly established yet. Some of them zealously dedicated themselves to the conclusion of a Concordat. In doing all this, whether they wanted it or not, they not only helped to stabilize the National Socialist regime but also tied their own hands. For a long time they were bound to the line of their profession of loyalty in order not to give the slightest excuse for jeopardizing the attainment of the Concordat, which all the same was not taken seriously on the part of the National Socialists.

Thus at the time of the referendum and Reichstag election on 12 November 1933, announcements were made from the pulpit in most dioceses—even by the newly appointed bishop of Münster, Clemens August Count von Galen, the later "Lion of Münster"—explaining the election along the lines of the government's interpretation, and also partly along that of the NSDAP.

The explanation of the Bavarian bishops differed from the others, it is true, in so far as it contained a slightly critical undertone, and it expressly permitted a free choice on the issue of the Reichstag election; its announcement was suppressed by the National Socialists.²⁰

The general pastoral letter of June, 1934, which of course did contain stern

²⁰ Cf. *Ecclesiastica*, 13th year, p. 480; there also are references to the suppression of the appeal. Cf. also Deuerlein, *Reichskonkordat*, p. 138 ff.

warnings and a scarcely veiled criticism of the anti-Christian assertions and claims of National Socialism, was not read aloud lest it impede the newly reopened negotiations concerning the implementation of the Concordat.²¹

In this connection, therefore, it should never be forgotten that, as far as is now known, Heinrich Brüning was the only prominent Catholic politician who emphatically warned the Vatican against concluding the Concordat.²²

Meanwhile, the bishops were not the only ones who, in 1933, gave their approval to the National Socialist regime and called for support for it. On the one hand, the Catholic population, honestly convinced by the principles of Center policy, hesitated to fall into step with the times. And not a few Catholic intellectuals and politicians, such as Konrad Adenauer, Heinrich Brüning, P. Gustav Gundlach, Josef Schmidlin and Georg Schreiber, at once ended their official activity within Catholic circles and withdrew into silent opposition. On the other hand, however, one began to hear from a group of intellectuals and leaders, at first not very numerous but whose voices quickly grew stronger as they came to the fore. They tried to defend the principles of the new order, to establish a more or less fundamental agreement between Catholic and National Socialist thought, and to interpret the coming of the National Socialist Reich as a great, positive turning point in history. With their wide range of differences on individual matters, they were

united in a deeply rooted anti-liberalism which resulted spontaneously in their rejection of democracy and of modern society, and their leaning toward authoritarian government, the leadership idea, and the "organic concept of public order." Added to this was their pronounced hostility toward Bolshevism, which they felt to be an immediate threat, and their annoyance at widespread "public immorality."²³

This new leadership group also aired its views vigorously in the press; this, seen in the perspective of time, is no longer strange. Journals and serial publications were founded which took upon themselves the task of serving "the building of the Third Reich out of the combined energies of the National Socialistic State and of Catholic Christianity." From the multiplicity of voices that were heard, however, no direct conclusion may be drawn concerning the over-all picture of the internal condition of German Catholicism. Today it can no longer be determined how far their voices met with a positive response or faded away without effect. Anyone who held a different opinion had much greater difficulty expressing it publicly. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to depreciate the significance of these voices for the intellectual climate and for public opinion within German Catholicism. Evidence to the contrary is their number, the importance of the authors, and

²¹ Cf. W. Gurian, *Der Kampf um die Kirche im Dritten Reich* (Luzern, 1936), p. 101 ff. Bracher-Sauer-Schulz, *Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung* (Opladen, 1960), p. 345.

²² Cf. Morsey, p. 406. R. Leiber's, S.J., conclusion, *op. cit.*, p. 219, that no one who was questioned had advised against the Concordat has reference, it must not be overlooked, only to those who were questioned, and these "in Rome."

²³ The battle against godlessness, bolshevism, and "public immorality" also appeared in almost all episcopal pronouncements as the special service, in some instances even as the "work of Salvation" of the National Socialist government, which deserved the thanks and the co-operation of Catholics. Cf. especially the pastoral letter of the Bavarian bishops of 5 May 1933, the general pastoral letter of 3 June 1933, note 13 above, the address of Bishop Bornewasser, note 19, and that of the Bishop of Bamberg, von Hauch, *Zeit und Volk*, I, p. 1054.

the intrinsic agreement with the pronouncements of the bishops.

Among professional theologians, it was chiefly Michael Schmaus and Josef Lortz who tried to build a bridge between Catholicism and National Socialism on the basis of anti-liberal Catholic thought concerning authority and the unity of human experience.²⁴ To Schmaus, National Socialism seemed the direct antithesis of Liberalism and Bolshevism, against whose monstrous nature it would restore to their proper relationships the "hierarchies and realities established by Nature." "The lists of National Socialist obligations and those of the Catholic imperatives stand of course on different levels of being, the former on the natural and the latter on the supernatural level. . . . But they point in the same direction." He considered the totalitarianism of National Socialism harmless since it had been given its authoritative interpretation by the Concordat.²⁵

To acknowledge this very totalitarianism and to pronounce an "unqualified yes" to National Socialism was J. Lortz' appeal. He may of course have been thinking more of an authoritarian regime than of the totalitarian one that was about to become a reality. Like Schmaus, Lortz recognized basic affinities between Catholicism and National Socialism. In the latter he thought he could see a movement that was breaking away from the decay of at least the last six hundred years, a movement which in its essence was also preparing the way for the life of faith.²⁶

²⁴ The writings of M. Schmaus, J. Lortz, and J. Pieper, cited below, appeared in the series "Reich und Kirche."

²⁵ Michael Schmaus, *Begegnungen zwischen katholischem Christentum und national-sozialistischer Weltanschauung* (Münster, 1933), p. 31; also p. 22.

²⁶ Josef Lortz, *Katholischer Zugang zum Nationalsozialismus kirchengeschichtlich gesehen, "Reich und Kirche,"* (Münster, 1933), pp. 5, 21 ff., and 26. Of course, a few years later, after

Jacob Hommes' unqualified approval of National Socialism was the result of the idea of an all-embracing cultural and ethnic revival as the realization of Natural Law. The political, economic, and cultural design of National Socialism was evidence for him of the "break-through of the complete Natural Law;" it signified the "restoration of the organic constitution of community and culture, the return to the order of Nature and of Creation," and thus it was the peculiar German form of the Western reaction to Liberalism and Rationalism.²⁷ Hommes did not stand alone with this idea; the well-known reverence for the pre-ordained hierarchies of creation which was characteristic of Catholics now assumed an amazingly concrete form.²⁸ The defensive attitude against Bolshevism, mentioned above, also contributed to making National Socialism appear to be the natural ally and protector.²⁹

The corporative-authoritarian social

1936, Lortz eliminated the concluding chapter of the new edition of his *History of the Church*, which approved of National Socialism.

²⁷ Jakob Hommes, "Katholisches Staats- und Kulturdenken u.d. Nationalsozialismus," *Deutsches Volk*, I, p. 285 ff.; also his "Nationalsozialismus, Katholizismus und Staatslexikon," *Ibid.*, p. 342 ff. Hommes thought that it would be interesting and stimulating to show "how much of the National Socialist body of thought was derived from the encyclicals of the popes on Natural Law." p. 346.

²⁸ Cf. Axel Emmerich (Edgar Alexander), "Ueberwindung des Liberalismus," *Zeit und Volk*, I, 110 ff.; Wilhelm Spael, "Der Katholik in der neuen Staatswirklichkeit," *Ibid.*, 637 ff.; Heinrich Lützel, "Der europäische Sinn der deutschen Wende," *Ibid.*, 672 ff.; the editorial report, "Nationalsozialismus und Katholizismus," in *Deutsches Volk*, I, 309 ff.; Wilhelm Reinermann, "Von der nationalen Revolution zur nationalen Volksgemeinschaft," *Ibid.*, 29 ff.

²⁹ The awareness of the bolshevist danger induced F. A. Kramer, the later founder of the *Rheinische Merkur*, to support and acknowledge the seizure of power by the National Socialists. Cf. *Zeit und Volk*, I, 188-191, esp. p. 191.

order and the social policy of the National Socialist regime also met with widespread approbation. These were interpreted as the defeat of the class struggle in favor of an order based on Natural Law and functional corporations like those which the Encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* had recommended. It was chiefly Theodore Brauer who explained and defended the social policy of the Third Reich in this sense.³⁰ Even Josef Pieper, whose opposition to National Socialism was never in doubt, thought that he could prove that here the agreement on fundamental ideological points "really goes right down into the very kernel of Christian social ethics and into the common source of all social-political motives of the National Socialist State."³¹

Another path toward positive approval and support of the National Socialist State led, by way of theological evaluation and interpretation of the Reich-idea, to a theological-political Reich-ideology. This was particularly widespread in the Catholic youth movement, among the German Benedictines, and in Catholic academic associations. The universalism of Othmar Spann supplied the intellectual background, as well as the youth movement's active interest in community and the unity of human experience. The "Reich" appeared to

be the genuinely Catholic form of political order because it was such a total thing; it appeared to be the drawing in of the political order into the order of salvation, and thus it appeared to be the Christian-Catholic counter-position toward the modern, individualistic and secularized State. Accordingly, Reich-policy was Catholic policy, and the Reich of Adolf Hitler signified the start toward the possibility of a new order that was organic in its all-inclusiveness and Christian in its essence, the transition from the Interregnum that had endured since 1803 to a new form in which *imperium* and *sacerdotium*, as confirmed by the Concordat, were again set free, each with its own task and with its own power.³²

Considerations of a similar sort had also contributed to the founding of the "Kreuz und Adler" association which took place in early April 1933 under the protective control of Papen. The association desired to bring together conservative Catholics on a basis that was above politics as a counterweight to the Center and to put them to work cooperating in the reconstruction of the Reich. Among its members were Catholic nobles like F. Freiherr von Lüninck; professors like Otto Schilling, Theodor Brauer and Karl Hugelmann; journalists like Emil Ritter, and in addition Eugen Kogon, Albert Mirgeler, and others.³³

³⁰ Cf. the miscellaneous essays of Theodor Brauer in the journal *Deutsches Volk*, 1st and 2nd years; also his pamphlet, "Der Katholik im neuen Reich. Seine Aufgabe und sein Anteil," (Munich, 1933). A rather clear warning against equating the National Socialist social policies with the corporate system is found, on the contrary, in the essay by Gustav Gundlach, S.J., "Fragen um die berufsständische Ordnung," in *Stimmen der Zeit*, 125 (1933), 127-137.

³¹ Josef Pieper, *Das Arbeitsrecht des neuen Reiches und die Enzyklika Quadragesimo anno*, "Reich und Kirche" (Münster, 1934) p. 6; it is worth noting that two months later the author withdrew the essay. In October, 1934, appeared the tract "Vom Sinn der Tapferkeit," in which Pieper opposed the falsification of ethical principles by National Socialism.

³² For individual cases see: A. Mirgeler, "Die deutschen Katholiken und das Reich," *Schildgenossen*, 13th year, p. 53 ff.; Robert Grosche, "Der Kampf um den Reichsgedanken im politisch-geistigen Leben der Gegenwart," *Deutsches Volk*, I, 91 ff., esp. pp. 96-98, Robert Grosche, "Die Grundlagen einer christlichen Politik der deutschen Katholiken," *Schildgenossen*, 13th year, p. 46 ff.; Friedrich Muckermann, S.J., "Führer und Volk," *Zeit und Volk*, I, 183-184; Damasus Winzen, O.S.B., "Gedanken zu einer 'Theologie des Reiches,'" *Catholica*, 2nd year (1933), p. 97 ff., esp. 112-115.

³³ Cf. *Deutsches Volk*, I, 68; Morsey, p. 373, n. 39.

The highly respected abbot of Maria Laach, Ildefons Herwegen, made himself in a special way the interpreter of a religious sublimation of the Führer-principle and of the new order that was arising on the ethnic forces of Blood and Soil. On various occasions he called on Catholics to cooperate with it.³⁴

"Nation and State have again become one through the action of the Führer Adolf Hitler. Because the Führer, carried along by an unswerving faith in the German nation, has brought it out of the solitude of its service and sacrifice to a new, joyful belief in itself, he has won the hearts of millions.

"The nation, his followers, respond to the Führer's faith. The willingness of all faithfully to follow him alone, creates a new experience of comradeship which lets our nation find its way back to the true source of its common life in Blood, Soil, and Destiny." ³⁵

Thus there was nothing at all unusual in Franz von Papen's famous address in Cologne before the November 1933 elections, calling on Catholics faithfully to follow their Führer and cooperate in the construction of a new Christian Reich which was already under way.³⁶

³⁴ Thus at a demonstration in Cologne at the end of May, 1933; see Morsey, p. 390; again in a lecture in Bonn, cf. *Zeit und Volk*, I, 275.

³⁵ Ildefons Herwegen, O.S.B., "Deutsches Heldentum in christlicher Verklärung," *Deutsches Volk*, I, 121-125 (122).

³⁶ F. von Papen, *Der 12. November 1933 und die deutschen Katholiken*, "Reich und Kirche" (Münster, 1934). Carl Schmitt came to approve and support the National Socialist State via a distinctive route. He was neither an advocate of the Christian Natural Law, nor did he think in terms of organic political theory or of Reich-ideology. As a teacher of constitutional law, in 1931-1932 he defended on juridical grounds the authoritarian government of the presidential cabinets; he considered this the last chance for the Weimar constitution. Now, after the enactment of the Enabling Act, he justified and defended the new order of the National Socialist rule which was then being established. Turn-

When the summons to positive cooperation with the National Socialist State resounded from all sides in this way, practical results could not be long in coming. The attitude of the Catholic Journeymen's Unions and of the Catholic Student Associations provide a striking example. During the early summer of 1933 they all re-formed their organizations according to the Leadership Principle, and emphatically embraced the principles and forms of the New Order.

At the meeting of the German Journeymen in Munich in June 1933, General Secretary J. Nattermann explained the establishment of the new Reich as God's appeal for a decisive blow against Bolshevism on the basis of the very character of the Germans. "Again has the German nation borne the shield of the Holy Empire against unbelief and paganism. Again the German nation was true to its ancient mission. This, German youth, is the way I interpret the lesson of our times." A short time later, on the occasion of the great Kolping pilgrimage to Trier in August, 1933, he declared that the Chancellor Adolf Hitler and the Father of the Journeymen's Association, Adolf Kolping, could have agreed with each other at their different tasks; he stressed "again" the fact that he would rejoice "if the honest, faithful sons of Kolping turned into faithful SA and SS men."

At the general meeting of the Unitas Association in Summer, 1933, the newly

ing violently against the "democratic functionalism" of Weimar and the abstract, empty character of the state based on civil rights, he interpreted the new trinity of "State, Dynamism, Nation" as the political order that is the special creation of the German Race; in this order, a concept of substantive justice and a theory of concrete systems was again gaining acceptance in place of liberalistic decadence. Cf. in this regard the publications collected and fully indicated by P. Tommissen, *Festschrift für Carl Schmitt* (Berlin, 1959).

installed leader Prince Karl zu Löwenstein demanded "a forthright willingness to cooperate to the best of one's energies in the great tasks of the new age." The new job of the student unions, to be the educational communities of the National Socialist State and to accomplish part of the educational work of National Socialism, he approved frequently and without reservation.³⁷

Similar statements were made by the KV (General Union of the Catholic Student Associations of Germany) and the RKDB (Circle of Catholic German Student Associations) when they merged into the Catholic Student Association (KB) early in September 1933: "We desire the Student Association because we desire the unity of all Catholic and German students under National Socialist direction."³⁸

For the New Germany Confederation, its parliament in Freiburg in early August 1933 signified "the break-through to a heartfelt, vigorous approval of the National Socialist State on the basis of an intellectual analysis," after it had earlier positively enlisted in the service of the "State without Parties."³⁹

At the time of the referendum and Reichstag election on 12 November 1933, the association's officers issued appeals

that regarded it as a matter of course or else of duty to vote as the Führer indicated. The declaration of the head of the CV (General Union of the Catholic Student Organizations), Förschach, was especially clear: "All men of the CV should in this decisive hour joyfully embrace the banners of Adolf Hitler. Whoever does not vote Yes at the referendum on 12 November and does not vote for the NSDAP slate, breaks his student oath, because in the hour of greatest danger he is betraying his Fatherland and his Nation."

It was only a logical step when the CV and the Catholic Student Association early in 1934 also gave up the confessional principle as "no longer justified in the new State," and when every Association officer at the general meeting of the CV in April 1934 was placed under the obligation of promoting the National Socialist State and its leaders, as well as the education of all members of the CV in the National Socialist spirit.

It should be noted that a considerable number of members resigned from the Catholic student associations because of this increasing coordination.

In contrast to this general approval and support of the National Socialist government, no opposition voiced itself openly in the public affairs of the Catholic Church after March 1933. That is not strange. As soon as the National Socialist government had the necessary means at its disposal, it was no longer prepared to tolerate any real opposition. Overt Catholic opposition had even less chance in so far as it would have not only opposed its rulers but also it would have had to turn against authoritative declarations of the bishops and against the predominant element of Catholic public opinion. Of course, there were many who thought differently, particularly among the pastoral clergy. These often knew the new authorities at first

³⁷ Cf. the report of the 69th general assembly of the UV in Frankfurt/Main, in *Unitas*, 73rd year, 120-121; also Prince zu Löwenstein, "Der Unitas-Verband in der deutschen Studentenfront," *Ibid.*, 119 ff.; zu Löwenstein, "Der Verband in der Zeitenwende," *Ibid.*, 74th year, 1 ff.; "Bericht über die südwestdeutsche Führertagung des UV," *Germania*, No. 310, 10 November 1933.

³⁸ *Germania*, No. 248, 9 September 1933.

³⁹ Cf. Heinrich Jansen-Cron, "Das Bundesething," *Leuchtturm, Monatsschrift der neudeutschen Jugend*, 27th year (1933), pp. 134-5, and the "Leitsätze Neudeutsche Jugend und neuer Staat," *Ibid.*, pp. 136-138. Preceding the formulation of these theses were addresses by Professor Franz Schnabel on the history of the Reich in the last centuries, and by Max Müller on National Socialism and the Reich of today, along with a concluding discussion.

hand and from their beginnings, but in this situation they could only express themselves through silence.

To be sure, even the "hidden" opposition, which was still possible throughout 1933, was on the whole quite sparse. In spite of everything, the weekly *Die junge Front*, edited by Johannes Maasen, maintained a rather significant reserve towards the National Socialist government up to the conclusion of the Concordat, and also did not shrink from indirect criticism; several editions were forbidden by the authorities.⁴⁰ *Hochland* also kept to the policy of hidden opposition; neither now nor later did it allow the name Hitler to be mentioned in its columns.⁴¹ *Stimmen der Zeit*, on the other hand, dropped its reservations after about June 1933 and called for a recognition of the facts and cooperation with the new State.⁴²

The present account, which is deliberately restricted to the year 1933, cannot for that reason report on the brave resistance which in later years was offered by clergy and laity to the National Socialist despotism, when the attacks on religion, Church and freedom became

⁴⁰ Cf. in particular the article "Gleichschaltung?" by J. M. (No. 17, 7 May 1933), and the article "Juden in Deutschland" by the same author (No. 21, 21 May 1933), which courageously intercedes for upright Jews. The attitude of the German Catholics and their spiritual leaders in regard to the Jewish question in 1933 and later urgently needs a closer examination.

⁴¹ Thus *Hochland*, after the conclusion of the Concordat, instead of the loud paeans of praise for the Concordat which were to be heard on all sides, published an essay on the Napoleonic Concordat of 1801 and its political and historical consequences, a warning which could not be mistaken; 31st year, No. 3 (Dec., 1933), pp. 242-245.

⁴² Thus Max Pribilla, S.J., "Nationale Revolution," *Stimmen der Zeit*, 125 (1933), pp. 156 ff., particularly pp. 159-163. Also M. Pries, S.J., "Die Staatsverfassung im totalen Staat," *Ibid.*, pp. 145 ff., and Ivo Zeiger, S.J., "Das Reichskonkordat," *Ibid.*, 126, pp. 1 ff. (See footnote 20, above.).

increasingly frequent. Nor can it report how some of those who here in 1933 appeared as advocates of the National Socialist government, following their better judgment, went over to the camp of the secret or open opposition. Let us therefore make specific reference to the honor roll of the Catholic resistance. It bears the names of some bishops, chiefly of Cardinal Faulhaber and of Bishop Count Galen, and of the many inmates of the concentration camps and those numerous unknown ones who suffered persecution. It is in no way rendered the less significant by the attitudes of 1933 which have been described. In the same way, but from an opposite point of view, to conceal the events of 1933 or simply to ignore them by pointing to this resistance and its consequent persecutions, would be taking a much too easy way out.

II

The essential question that must be answered is this: how could it have happened that the decisive clerical and intellectual leaders of German Catholicism in 1933 saw in Hitler and the National Socialist State the precursors of a far-reaching revival, and emphatically called for positive cooperation and support of the National Socialist government?

It does not suffice to answer this question by referring to the ever-present possibility of error in all human wisdom, especially in politics, and confessing that such an error had been made. While it is possible that tactical factors were involved in the episcopal pronouncements, in the other cases—and even in the former to some extent—the approval and support of the National Socialist regime was grounded so emphatically on principles, and "Catholic" ones at that, that we have to look for the *intrinsic* reasons for the "disposition" of German

Catholicism towards the National Socialist government in 1933. Our only other choice is to assume at the outset that it was all a matter of opportunism. How far opportunism may have been of decisive influence, along with such intrinsic reasons, in concrete, actual situations, will only be decided on the basis of sources of information that are still inaccessible.

The Catholic has lived in a state of tension toward the modern secularized world since its beginnings. The organizational patterns which this world produced, namely the modern State and modern society, have remained from the moment of their inception alien to him. They were no longer his world, and he never quite felt at home in them. For German Catholics this general tension was confirmed in specific terms and was colored by the experience of the *Kulturkampf*, in which German Catholics, intellectually and existentially, were expelled from both State and society. The State in which they lived was no longer in any respect their "home," and in a society that was increasingly shaped by Liberalism, they were considered backward and ultramontane. The Catholics' response was the inner emigration from State and society. They sought and found their political-sociological position *outside* the State and society—in the Church—and from this position they decided on their political conduct *within* the State. From that time on, their combined intervention on behalf of the rights of religion and the Church was the ultimate, decisive factor which rallied the Catholics for political action, and which marked them off from other groupings. Also, the faithful Catholic reached his political decisions chiefly as a churchman, not as a citizen, insofar as he had to make a choice between these two. His relationship with the State was crippled. Numerous professions of faith

in the national State need not delude us about this *inner* situation; in truth, they rather confirm it.

The result of this situation was that in the political thinking of Catholics the areas of religion, Church and school constituted the real marrow of the commonweal and of good political order, in comparison with which all other areas had to take a back seat. Added to this was the fact that those areas exhibit a direct relationship to the Natural Law, so that their importance as a matter of principle in the political model was heightened even more, and compromise on them was completely out of the question. Thus there arose among Catholics a specific narrowing of political consciousness which increasingly robbed them of the ability to judge and decide on critical political questions, that is, when the total situation was at stake. For, by the fact that they attributed to certain areas of the political-social order as such a claim to the absoluteness of Natural Law, these were raised above all other areas and isolated from them. One no longer made the totality of the political order in its unity and historical contingency the point of departure for political decisions, but rather partial areas by comparison were merely of second-rate importance and expendable when crises arose.

Hitler's assurances that he would maintain friendly relations between Church and State, and his readiness to conclude a concordat covering the areas of Church and school (for Hitler merely a political calculation), hit the German Catholics, therefore, in their most vulnerable spot and, from the political point of view, were bound to become a deadly temptation for them. Back in the Spring of 1918 a part of the Center Party and of the Prussian episcopate, chiefly Cardinal von Hartmann of Cologne, had rejected the proposal for

abolishing the Prussian three-class electoral law because, in view of the changing majority relationships [among the electorate], the political significance of Church and school questions would thus be endangered.⁴³

Now the conflict was even much sharper. Was not the offer being made here legally to secure and guarantee the "Natural Law" areas of politics, the freedom of Church and school? The goal which the Catholics had been striving after for decades, which their political representation, the Center, had not attained, and which therefore neither Empire nor Republic had fulfilled for them, suddenly seemed within easy reach. In comparison with this, of what importance was the annulment of the Weimar Constitution, the foreseeable end of the political parties, the restriction of political liberty? Cardinal Faulhaber's exclamation in his letter of gratitude to Hitler for the Concordat focuses like a magnifying-glass the political attitude of German Catholicism which had of necessity to err in what was its real political task: "What the old parliaments and parties did not accomplish in sixty years, your far-seeing statesmanship realized in six months of world-historical significance."⁴⁴

This is precisely the same attitude that is revealed in the entries in Msgr. Kaas' diary and which is probably the only explanation for his conduct, which was more than questionable from the viewpoint of the Weimar Constitution. The Kulturkampf mentality, which had not been overcome, and the concentration of political thought on the Natural Law concept of the *bona particularia* had this effect: in the Spring and Summer of

1933, the decisive policy makers for German Catholicism were not so much unwilling as rather incapable of acting like real statesmen; instead, they could only think in terms of ecclesiastical-cultural political goals. The statesmanlike insight and sense of responsibility which were evidenced nevertheless by men such as Brüning, state representative Count Galen, Joos, Letterhaus and some others deserves to be called to attention. But on the whole it was no accident that they could accomplish nothing. We should not underestimate the fact that the foremost parliamentary positions within the Center Party and the Bavarian Peoples Party were essentially in the hands of clergymen. Because of their spiritual calling, these men were much more seriously exposed to the danger of regarding politics chiefly as a means for securing important ecclesiastical-cultural ends, and of seeing in a political party of Catholics the advance guard of the Church within the world.

The tragic condition of the Weimar Republic once again becomes clearly apparent at this point. As was evident at its demise, from the very beginning the Weimar Republic had no earnest, resolute defenders of its political essence, resting as it did on a political and philosophical compromise. It had mere adherents, who confronted it in the final analysis with a mental reservation, and who wanted to use the unrestricted neutrality of the Constitution as a means towards the revocation of this compromise. The Social Democrats approved of it because and insofar as it opened the way for Socialism. "Republicanism is too tame, Socialism is our aim," ran E. Bernstein's famous watchword. The conservative groups rejected it as such; they took it as part of the bargain, as a transition toward monarchical restoration. In the crisis of 1933 it became apparent that among the Catholics too a corresponding

⁴³ On this point, Karl Bachem, *Geschichte der Zentrumsparlei*, Vol. 8 (1931), 293 ff.; also *Der Interfraktionelle Ausschuss*, edited by E. Matthias and R. Morsey (Düsseldorf, 1959), II, 560 ff.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Stimmen der Zeit*, Vol. 163, p. 367.

reservation was in operation: "Republicanism is too tame, confessional schools and a 'Christian' State is our aim." A republic that rests in the hands of such adherents cannot survive a serious crisis.

The unwillingness to rally around the Weimar State in its crisis was promoted by the Natural Law political doctrine as such, which was and is being taught to Catholics. This political doctrine in the form it received through the Neo-Scholasticism instituted by Leo XIII recognizes the distinction between the supra-historical Natural Law principles of political order, and the concrete political and constitutional forms that are independent of the Natural Law and are the result of historical contingency; toward the latter it declares its neutrality. This distinction has the result that all normative and binding force lies in the Natural Law principles, separated from historical forms and systems. These concrete historical forms and systems as such are cast into the area of "historical accidents" or "mere reality," of things which are "in themselves" insignificant, and therefore of no normative worth. Nothing is to be gained by devoting one's full energy to them when they encounter a crisis. The declaration of neutrality regarding political forms, first expressly formulated by Pope Leo XIII, provides an expression of this attitude. Only that which is directly demanded by the principles of Natural Law deserves one's complete, personal dedication.

Now that means that the feeling for historical and political legitimacy and continuity must be lost, and with it also the capacity for political conduct conditioned by history. Despite the fact that theoretically it is strictly rejected, the doctrine of the "normative power of existing reality" undergoes in practice an effective resurrection. For one is prepared immediately to recognize "given facts," whether a revolution or an elec-

toral victory of a party that is hostile to the Constitution (these things, of course, occur in the realm of historical accidents and contingency), if only there remains the possibility of realizing the Natural Law principles.⁴⁵ What revolutionary, concerned about fortifying his power, will not make that concession rightaway! Thus in every historically decisive moment a more or less complete political paralysis inevitably sets in. Every allegiance, however firm, to a concrete political form or constitution becomes a waste of effort as soon as it is put to the test. To keep the peace is the first duty of the citizen, as long as one feels that the Natural Law remains safe or is in the process of being secured.⁴⁶

Applying these principles, the German Catholics in 1918 indifferently let the

⁴⁵ In this connection belongs the scholastic topic on the "tyrannus a titulo," the ruler who has attained power illegally, whom no one may resist any longer in so far as he successfully discharges the duties of government. An example of a concrete result is demonstrated by M. Preis, S.J.'s essay "Die Staatsverfassung im totalen Staat," *Stimmen der Zeit*, Vol. 125 (1933), pp. 145 ff. It is stated there: "The specific, unambiguous awareness of the historical contingency of all political theories can actually and morally bind him (the Catholic) to dissolve the once-necessary association with obsolete forms of political life and, in a new situation (!), to explore and test the ability of his principles to assume new forms." Therefore the author, in 1933, took his stand on the "new situation" of the totalitarian State, and considered the State and its constitutional principles as "demanded by today's political necessities, in the light of the Natural Law."

⁴⁶ In point of fact, Pius XI's reply to the German episcopate concerning their general pastoral letter of 3 June 1933 (cf. above), says this also, although with a positive twist: "There is not the slightest doubt that Catholic men in every nation, precisely on the basis of their religion—faithfully and enthusiastically professed—cooperate with public authority honestly, loyally, and enduringly, if only the rights of God and of the Church remain safe and unharmed." *Die junge Front*, 2nd year, No. 40, 1 October 1933.

monarchy collapse, and in 1933 they made no serious attempt to defend the parliamentary-democratic republic which they had helped to create. At the moment when Hitler stated that he would respect "Christian principles," the Catholics on the basis of their political principles lost all interest in defending the Weimar State. (We disregard the general question of democracy-fatigue.) Loyalty to the existing historical constitution had no place in the Natural Law. In part from the moment when he secured control of the government, but under any circumstances from the time of his Reichstag address of 23 March 1933, Hitler appeared to be the "legitimate authority" which had a claim to one's loyalty and obedience. That is precisely what the German bishops declared five days later, on 28 March. From here on the terrifying lethargy which seized the Center Party after 23 March also becomes understandable, and it never left the Party until its demise. The Center was literally caught between two thrones.

This two-fold complication—on the one hand the *Kulturkampf* situation, on the other the unhistorical Natural Law doctrine of the State—does not by itself, however, suffice to explain the widespread approval and support of the National Socialist regime by German Catholicism in 1933. The essential motive for this must be sought in the deeply-rooted anti-Liberalism which characterized Catholic thought since the nineteenth century, and does so even today.

Historically examined, this anti-Liberalism is a result of the Church's defense against and victory over the Enlightenment.⁴⁷ At first it had a religious character and was directed against the criticism

aimed, as a matter of principle and in the framework of reason, against religion, revelation and dogma. Through the influence of the Restoration and of Romanticism, however, it soon became a political attitude. It received a special authorization through the papal condemnation of Lamennais (*Mirari vos*, 1832), which struck not only at philosophical Liberalism but also as a consequence at "liberal Catholicism" as a political movement.⁴⁸

Against the individualism of the Enlightenment, as expressed in the theory of the social and political contract, in the theory of popular sovereignty, and in the emancipation of the individual from traditional systems and moral restraints, there was set up the theory of the "organic" order holding to "realities established by nature," based on authority, a genuine community, and an (occupational) class structure. Against the onset of the "modern" world with its drive for emancipation, this organic theory, according to its origin and its content, was designed for the preservation or the restoration of the pre-revolutionary and pre-liberal kind of life. The farther historical development proceeded along the route marked out by the ideas of 1789, the more anachronistic and unreal this theory became. Becoming in the end nothing but a counter-ideology to the individualistic and autonomous system of the Enlightenment, it was, nevertheless, closely bound up with it in its very negation. Whatever seemed to be progress and achievement for the Enlightenment theory—and that included the real accomplishments of the nineteenth cen-

⁴⁷ Cf. Franz Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, Vol. 4, *Die religiösen Kräfte* (Freiburg, 1951), pp. 44-46, 164-202.

⁴⁸ Today it is known that this condemnation of "liberal Catholicism" was pronounced chiefly through the insistence of Metternich, who saw the security of restored thrones endangered by this movement. Cf. Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte der neuesten Zeit*, Vol. I (Munich, 1933), 559-560.

ture—had to represent decline and decay when examined “organically.”

In this way Catholic political thought gradually lost all objectivity and candor toward historical reality and its problems. One no longer began with existing, concrete reality, with the aim of determining what was possible and then working with that; rather, one started out by measuring this reality according to a preconceived and completely alien theory. On this basis it was then supposed to be transformed from the ground up. Such is the intrinsic thought pattern of that ideology. Accordingly, the “theory” became more and more ideological and abstract. Since the first World War, it was invigorated and revived by the “organic” political theory of Romanticism, which Othmar Spann and his universalist school brought up to a new renaissance. Also the idea of a revival of the “Reich,” generated by the liturgical movement and the Catholic youth movement, found a place in it. Again it signified a flight from concrete problems and decisions presented by the modern State and modern society.

Thus Catholic political thought in the end was living off principles that denied at least two hundred years of historical development. People may disagree about the justification for such a relationship with history; but when one stands in opposition to two hundred years of historical development and of historical irrevocability, one cannot at the same time play at practical politics and hope to accomplish anything, since practical politics cannot evade historical facts. That must lead to illusions or to catastrophe. By 1933, in wide German Catholic circles, an ideological bias and detachment from reality had been reached which caused people to see in the National Socialist movement a welcome ally in the battle against the “liberal monster” and for a Christian order that was bring-

ing about the “full realization of the Natural Law.” The reason was that National Socialism very emphatically considered itself anti-liberal and anti-Marxist, and made use of much of the vocabulary of “organic” thought. Whenever one found in National Socialist terminology similar expressions, such as “natural ethnic order,” “corporative-organic structure of the State,” “subjection to the community,” “nationality,” “authority,” “Reich,” one assumed that they meant the same thing, and believed that one was experiencing the dawn of a new and better order that was correcting centuries-old errors.

The incongruity between this situation and historical reality could not have been greater. For the “organic” unity of the pre-revolutionary systems had, under the impact of the turning-point of 1789, separated once and for all into “Society” and “State.” In the emancipation from the old systems, bourgeois-liberal society had taken shape. In this society the individual was released from traditional restraints, all men were recognized as possessing absolute, individual rights, and, on the basis of freedom and equality, were offered the opportunity for an unrestricted economic and personal development. At the same time, there was the State as a necessary counterpart; as the bearer of sovereign power and authority, it had the task of protecting the existing ways of life, and of setting limits to the emancipated individualism of society so that the individual was not hopelessly delivered up to the rhythm of acquisition and consumption. Although State and society are concretely bound together in many ways, the fact of their “separation” is irrevocable. If one refuses to put up with the juxtaposition of “State” and “society,” here is the only alternative: either the State is dissolved into society (whereby the need-and-consumption society is

given free reign and the individual is subordinated to the laws that determine its operation), or society is abolished by the State (whereby the rights of man and the individual are at the same time discarded). The former is the path taken by Liberalism and Marxism, albeit in basically different ways; the latter is the path of Fascism.

Hegel was the first philosopher to recognize this basic concept of the modern world as it took final form in 1789, and in his *Rechtsphilosophie* he discussed it in its intrinsic necessity.⁴⁹ He was of the opinion that henceforth the symbiosis of freedom and order was possible only in the co-existence of State and society. Despite all the charges of pantheism and deification of the State that are raised against him, he stressed the fact that the possibility of this co-existence is conditioned by the workings of the Christian Faith. For only the Christian Faith is able, on the one hand, to recognize intrinsically the freedom and individuality of all men on which modern society is based, and on the other hand to accept a principle of authority that extends over all and preserves rules of moral conduct.⁵⁰ We cannot say that the evolution of the last one hundred and fifty years has disproved Hegel's insight.

The leaders of German Catholicism who came out in favor of an "organic" order that would prevail over liberal society became in this way, without any awareness of their own ideological bias, influential precursors of the fascist revolt against "society" which occurred in Germany in 1933. To this extent their original alliance with the National Socialist system had a certain logic to it. But in the end, the result that followed was just

the opposite from what they had striven for, namely, a more complete dominance over embattled liberal society. For the Third Reich so falsified and discredited all concepts of political life, authority and supra-personal order, that since 1945 it has proven impossible to justify the State's existence except as the servant of an unrestrained economic, acquisitive society. Thus all institutional obstacles have been removed that might prevent the realization of modern society's tendency to consider itself the sum total of existence and to subordinate everything else to its operations.

Finally, this context also makes clear the tragic role of the episcopal pronouncements in 1933. German Catholics received from their bishops, on the basis of their pastoral authority, advice and directions for political conduct which it would have been better not to obey. Politically, that would have been correct.⁵¹

At the same time, the profound, inherent question of the ecclesiastical *potestas indirecta* is raised. However wide its competence, precisely as an *indirect* power it is nowhere directly responsible. Those Catholics who had loyally and submissively obeyed the political advice and directives of their bishops in 1933, had in 1945 to bear alone the consequences of their conduct at the de-nazification processes, without being able publicly to demand episcopal protection and defense.

All of this should have been the occasion for re-thinking both the question of the extent and the competence of the episcopal office in political judgment and awareness. It seems that German

⁴⁹ Cf. Joachim Ritter, *Hegel und die Französische Revolution* (Cologne-Opladen, 1957).

⁵⁰ Hegel, *System der Philosophie*, Part 3, Glockner edition (Stuttgart, 1929), paragraph 552, pp. 434 ff.

⁵¹ Cf. also Friedrich Muckermann, S.J., *Der deutsche Weg* (Zurich, 1946), p. 25. He had, after 1933, "again and again to admire the secure instinct of the Catholic people who saw much more clearly than the academicians, and who recognized the dreadful danger much earlier than the bishops themselves."

Catholicism has today assimilated itself to society with just as few reservations as it had in 1933 in serving the State against society; in doing this it has again missed the just mean, but from the opposite side. Or can it be said in earnest

that the attitudes and political principles that led to the mistakes of 1933 have been overcome in today's German Catholicism?

Translated by RAYMOND SCHMANDT

The above article has already stimulated widespread discussion and controversy in German periodicals, especially by Catholics attempting to re-examine the extent of their misunderstanding of National Socialism. Much of the debate centers on a search for a definition of the ecclesiastical *potestas indirecta*. *Hochland* itself returns to the subject in its August issue, and through the kindness of its editors, who forwarded advance proofs to us, we are able to present at least a summary account of a strong rejoinder to Böckenförde's position, written by an able historian of the Hitler period, Hans Buchheim (who is, in fact, cited by Böckenförde, cf. footnote 1, p. 283). The article which we have translated, plus this brief review of Buchheim's arguments, should suggest that these current attempts to search further for the meaning of the recent past are not impelled merely by a disinterested antiquarianism. Those who disagree as to the nature and extent of the mistakes made by German Catholics in the early 30's are obviously concerned with the situation of Catholics in relation to the secular political world of today.

Dr. Buchheim contends that by ignoring a great many details of the atmosphere and attitudes of the specific year 1933, Böckenförde has falsified the actual judgments made by various Catholics politicians and bishops whom he cites. He claims that Böckenförde is viewing support of the government in 1933 as a far more conscious and clear-cut support of National Socialism than it was.

At the time national feelings of pride and desire for unity were predominant. Based on the belief that they had been betrayed by the Versailles treaty, German emotions were seeking a symbol of unity which would answer their deep needs, and Hitler had become this symbol. His party, however, was only one among several in power, and its racist and totalitarian aims were by no means clear. Much of the support given the government was given it as a conservative national authority, and nothing more. Even those who saw dangerous tendencies in National Socialism hoped or believed that the exercise of responsible power would tend to eliminate them.

This background of national emotion must be assumed behind Msgr. Kaas' decision to support the abrogation by Hitler of the Weimar constitution. Buchheim says it is "historically false" to say that his choice was made on "ecclesiastical-cultural" grounds; it was, rather, in response to broader aspirations. His mistake was not associated with his Catholicism, but with weakness of character and judgment, sacrificing constitutional law to hopes of possible political influence. In support of this position, Buchheim quotes Kaas' speech outlining his reasons for the decision of the Center party:

"The present hour is not a time for words. Its single ruling law is the need for immediate, constructive, preserving action. This action can be born only in union. If there is national division and conflict, it will be threatened with destruction at birth. The German Center

Party, which has with thought and conviction long supported the great unifying ideas despite all passing considerations, places itself at this hour above all political and partisan concerns. It gives lesser importance to those very interests which in normal periods it would be its duty to keep uppermost and which it could scarcely ignore.

"In view of the burning contemporary needs of both the people and the state, because of the gigantic efforts demanded of all of us by the need to rebuild Germany,—above all, by the storm-clouds both within and around our country, we of the German Center Party extend our hand in this hour to all, even former opponents, who wish to continue the work of national salvation, to accelerate the restoration of an ordered state, to set up a strong dam against chaotic developments, and will work along with all those of whatever group or party who nobly desire reconstruction and order."

Buchheim's second major specific disagreement is with what he calls Böckenförde's polemic against the German bishops. He claims that the latter implies that the Bishops did not give help to those who requested it in the post-war de-nazification era, and he says that Böckenförde uses words such as "ambivalent" to describe statements by bishops with the intended effect of being

subtly derogatory. He also insists that quotations have been taken from episcopal letters and statements which show only support of the government, and that he has omitted phrases which qualify this support.

For example, after the second quotation from the Pastoral letter of June 3 (cf. Böckenförde, p. 288, end of footnote 13), the text continues: "We may expect, on the other hand, that the authority of the state, conforming to that model of authority which exists within the Catholic Church, will not limit human freedom any more than it must for the common good, but will be adorned with justice, and give or leave to its subjects whatever belongs to them—prosperity, honor, or freedom. Every misuse of authority leads to its weakness and dissolution, and every injustice perpetrated by the authority of the state through over-extension of its powers, or by permitting its subordinate organs to overstep themselves, or through unreasonable intrusions upon the people as a whole—such misuse of authority will revenge itself upon authority as well as on the people."

Buchheim believes, therefore, that the Bishops did as well as they could in this time of confusion. What misjudgments and mistakes were made, he believes, were not based on peculiarly Catholic weaknesses.

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